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He slashed madly at the coils of the snake.

FOR FAME

AND

FORTUNE

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CONTENTS

		PAGE
WHEN CHARLIE REIGNED IN HOLYROOD	By Edward Tebbutt	5
HOW SPARKES UNEARTHED AN INHERITANCE	By H. Hervey	14
THE PIRATE PE-TA-YANG	By Dr. Gordon Stables, R.N.	25
THE SECRET OF THE IDOL	By W. Murray Craydon	33
THE BABY OF THE 40TH DRAGOONS	By Duncan McLaren	40
A TALE OF MORESBY MANOR	By Duncan McLaren	45
ACROSS THE VIADUCT	By W. Lloyd Summers, B.A.	48
OUT INTO THE NIGHT	By F. Eastwood	55
HOW SPARKES "BAGGED" A TIGER	By H. Hervey	68
FAME AND FORTUNE	By W. C. Metcalfe	75
WHEN GREEK MEETS GREEK	By Horace Irving	85
MARJORIE OF THE GRANGE	By Duncan McLaren	91
A BOLD BUCCANEER	By L. P. Moore	96
OVERHEARD	By Duncan McLaren	100
THE EAGLE'S EGGS		103
AYESHA'S PILGRIMAGE		107
A SMALL MALIGNANT	By Arthur King	110
TRAPPED IN A DERELICT	By W. C. Metcalfe	117
THE SACRED CHAIN	By C. H. Lyall	124
CAUGHT BY A SNAKE		128

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For Fame and Fortune

When Charlie Reigned in Holyrood.

By Edward Tebbutt.

And bonny days they were, though of short duration. Even now, when years have fled and the Hanoverians are firmly seated on the throne of Britain, my mind wanders restlessly back to the grey old palace by the hillside, and the boy who stole to the Isle of Eriskay, to wrest the crown of England from him who holds it by no law, nor right, nor heritage. A worthy son of his fathers was this Charles Edward Stuart, whom men term the Young Pretender. Handsome, *debonnaire,* winning; a man with a woman's loving heart, and a faith passing belief. He fought for a destiny which he dreamed was his by law divine, and before his gladdened eyes shone a star of hope, which surely was ne'er wholly shrouded, save when the rock-line of Scotland faded into the shades of eventide, and again he threw in his lot with the world outside—a fugitive; a banished prince; the last of a stock whose wrongs shall be deplored by generations yet unnumbered. We, who fought with him, must fain seek our reward in the Cause and not the consummation. Yet, for my own part, I am more than repaid by the love which his service has carried into my life—the love of the sweetest, truest woman whom God e'er sent to grace the fairyland of His earth. 'Tis of this love that I would tell you, even now.

I was plain Duncan Macintyre in those days, with the sword which my father had swung at Preston, and proud in the tartan of the clan of which I was later to be hailed as chief. I joined Charlie's banner at the disheartening meeting in Glenfinnan, and after our army had swelled to an host, and we had passed the Canon Gate into dear Auld Reekie, I was chosen as captain of the Palace Guard, that I might be near to the young chevalier, who regarded me with more than

a passing affection. Thus it happened that I was present in Holyrood Palace at a council which altered the whole tenor of my existence, and which brought me to the side of the girl who, even to-day, is the same bonnie lassie as she who tricked the Captain of Cope's advance force, and who rode through the night to Edinburgh town to carry her message to the gallant Cameron, whom all should honour as palatine of Lochiel.

I was standing near the window of a small chamber on the western wing, watching the sunlight play over the bracken and crags of Arthur's Seat; watching the mist of the morning rise lightly from valley to hill, and away to the sky above. Lord George Murray was busily writing by the littered table; Charlie and Lochiel were pacing the floor like men demented.

"They are traitors, every man of them!" cried Charlie a second time, "and, *mort de ma vie!* the day I come into my own shall be a bad one for these Lowland chieftains."

"Surely there must be one in all Midlothian who hath love for your Highness's cause?" exclaimed Lochiel, halting by my barred window, "though, by my faith, I can recall no likely name at the moment."

"There is Sir Thomas Carnegie, of Scardray, by Hawthornden Glen," said I, making bold to offer my own suggestion, as, indeed, I ofttimes did.

Lord George turned hopefully to Cameron, and Charlie slapped me gaily on the shoulder.

"Good, my Duncan!" he cried. "'Twas to Carnegie my father would ever commend me. See here, Murray, this inactivity is killing me. I myself will ride to the laird of Scardray to implore his aid and his counsel. Gad's mercy! I'll warrant me he shall sit here by your reverend side ere many another night has flown."

"The errand is fraught with danger," said Murray cautiously.

"S'death!" cried Charlie, laughing gaily at blue-eyed Lochiel, "was danger ever absent from a wandering monarch such as I?"

"But what force would you take?"

"Force? You forget, Murray, that it is persuasion and not force that can appeal to such men as Carnegie of Scardray. I will ask Duncan Macintyre here to bear me company, and we will ride in humble fashion to this Lowland warrior—as a suitor who comes to woo; and surely to some purpose, Lochiel, for what Stuart e'er pleaded in vain, save 'twere a Parliament whose favour he would court?"

So he advanced his request, and with such effect that the shadows had scarce grown short about the palace, when together we cantered across the Hunter's Bog 'neath Arthur's Seat, striking out into the country lanes as Duddingston Loch was rounded. The Prince was surely in his brightest and happiest mood that day, for naught could he do but sing the praises of the spring-decked country that he was so proud to call his kingdom. As we reached the singing Esk, which seems to lose itself in the silence of Hawthornden Glen, we paused for some moments to admire the arcadian beauty of the wooded hillside, though Charlie's impatience would not permit us to tarry as long as I myself might have desired. So we passed at a gallop through the undulating country beyond, and thence to Scardray Manor, where dwelt Sir Thomas Carnegie the loyalist.

Slowly we rode up the avenue, with its canopy of rustling beech trees, and a silence fell upon us as we surveyed the sweeping park; the herds of startled deer; the weed-patched lake gleaming dark and motionless beneath the rays of the mid-day sun. Then, at length, Scardray Manor rose grey and gabled in the distance, and on the steps, awaiting our coming, stood a huge, rugged Scotchman, with a pair of loose-tongued boarhounds panting by his side. He bowed courteously as we reached the drawbridge; we, still in silence, returned his greeting. The Prince sprang from his horse and walked quickly towards him.

"Sir Thomas Carnegie," he said in his curious boy's voice, "my name is Charles Edward

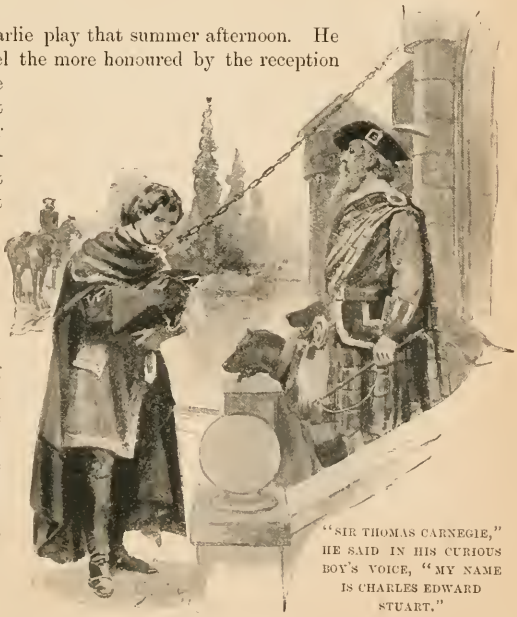
Stuart, and I bear a message from my father, who was honoured with your friendship." Thus did the chevalier win Sir Thomas Carnegie to his service.

Forgetful of me, as I still bestrode my saddle and held Charlie's charger to my side, the pair conversed in an undertone that none might catch the purport of their words, and mighty impatient had I grown ere Sir Thomas drew towards me with grave apology.

"Your pardon, Captain Macintyre," he said, the Prince nodding favourably to me over his shoulder the while, "I beg you to excuse my rudeness in not summoning my grooms ere this."

He struck a huge bell with the butt-end of his riding whip, and an ostler ran from the stable gate as if he would assist me to alight, though, i' faith, I was too quickly to my feet to need his services; and, with Carnegie and Prince Charlie, I stepped into the hall of Scardray Manor. The morning-room, whither we were conducted, commanded a magnificent view of the well-timbered park, with the gaunt Pentland Hills lying long and low in the distance. Seated by the window was a lady with hair white as the snow-capped summits of the northern bens—Carnegie's mother I learnt from our presentation—and by her side, a girl of such surpassing beauty that never since have I cast eyes of admiration upon one other of her sex. Her hair fell in rippling curls upon the whiteness of her forehead; her eyes were bright and steadfast; her little prim mouth lent an air of daintiness to her whole features, which, to a rough Highlander such as I, was all the world more charming than the be-flowered, be-patched artificiality of the ladies who attended the *levées* at Holyrood Palace. Never, I wot, was victory so complete as the victory of this lassie over my heart; no, not even our victory at Prestonpans, when Cope was driven away to whence he came, and Gardner fell to the earth like the gallant soldier that he surely was.

No haughty monarch's *rôle* did Charlie play that summer afternoon. He came as a friend, said he, and would feel the more honoured by the reception of friendliness. So we sat round the curving window to chat as the merest country gentlemen might, though after a time the Prince and Carnegie wandered out into the park that they might the more privately converse. Then it was that I begged Mistress Marjorie to show me the beauties of her uncle's estate, and she, nothing loath, led the way under the tinted beech trees to where the lake shimmered green in the distance. As we descended a short, steep brae, she stooped to pluck a sprig of purple heather, and with her own dainty fingers she pinned it to the breast of my tunic.



"SIR THOMAS CARNEGIE," HE SAID IN HIS CURIOUS BOY'S VOICE, "MY NAME IS CHARLES EDWARD STUART."

"The heather should be Prince Charlie's symbol," she said, "and as you and I are proud to be his servants, you may wear this sprig that you ne'er forget his cause."

"Ne'er could a Macintyre forget the cause he undertakes," cried I, "and that being so, I will wear the heather to remember her who gave it."

"Were I Prince Charlie," she said laughingly, "I would make bold to hope that Captain Macintyre can better fight than pay a gallant compliment."

"And were I Prince Charlie," I retorted, "I would ask nothing better than permission to remember Mistress Marjorie without e'en the aid of the heather.'

"But you are only Captain Macintyre, you see," said Marjorie.

"Yet would I crave the same permission," I replied.

She was silent for a moment, and I feared that my bold words had perchance offended her Then a wave of colour flashed to her cheek, as she stooped to gather a second sprig.

"The first," she said, as she arranged them side by side, "is for the cause I love."

"And the second?" I exclaimed eagerly.

A smile of mischief lighted her eyes and carried the dimples to her cheek.

"Were not your chest so broad," she replied, "it might have happened that the first had seemed less lonely by itself." And with this I perforce must be content. So we chatted, until the lengthening shadows told us that the hour approached when I must set out with Charlie to Holyrood Palace, and reluctantly we turned our steps towards the manor again. As we reached the drawbridge, I beheld a sight which filled me no more with amazement than dismay. For there, in the courtyard, stood a score of tethered horses, and by the gate lounged a crowd of soldiers arrayed in some barbarous uniform of the south. The fellows caught sight of me ere I could draw back again, and a shout of laughter rose as one burly trooper sprang to the salute and remained erect in mimic courtesy. The great oak door stood open, so with Marjorie by my side, I strode into the hall, where our footsteps drew Sir Thomas from the library—and with him, a coarse English officer of some considerable size; with a red moustache which curled ferociously to his ears, and a scar running across his left eyebrow, endowing him with a most peculiar squint.

I SWUNG THE COLONEL TO ONE SIDE OF THE HALL AND THE TROOPER TO THE OTHER.

"Captain Macintyre," said Carnegie gravely; "we are honoured with the visit of Colonel Clutterbuck, of the King's 3rd Light Dragoons."

The colonel saluted, and clicked his spurs.

"Your servant, captain," quoth he, "and many apologies for this intrusion. But, you see, in these days of riot and rebellion, we must e'en make shift with the manners of warfare."

I made some suitable reply, though, for my soul, I could not comprehend the situation. We had no suspicion in Edinburgh that English troops were in the

district, and yet here was this complaisant colonel assuming the airs of a military armada, and backed by but a score of loud-tongued soldiers. That he was riding in advance of a considerable army was evident, or how account for his presence in a country which he knew to be hostile? And it was equally evident that I must ride to Holyrood at any cost, to acquaint Lochiel with the turn affairs had taken. As I rightly conjectured, Charlie was safe in hiding; for though Clutterbuck had no suspicion of his presence, it was quite possible that he would recognise his features, or that the Prince's appearance might betray his identity in some unlooked-for manner. Truly had Lord George Murray spoken, when he said that our errand was fraught with danger!

"I have mentioned to Colonel Clutterbuck that you are only paying me a flying visit," remarked Carnegie in level tones, "and he is good enough to place no obstacle in the way of your departure."

I bowed a second time. In that case, I could be within the palace ere the night had grown dark.

"Certainly I shall not detain you," protested Clutterbuck, who had the grace to perceive that his presence was a most unwelcome intrusion; "I must merely stipulate that a couple of my troopers attend you, to see that you ride not to Edinburgh."

"I shall be honoured in the company of your troopers," I returned, though I fear me that the sarcasm was wasted. For, after all, their escort would entail but small anxiety. Surely a Macintyre of Macintyre were a match for a couple of English troopers.

Scarcely had I spoken, however, ere a red-coated soldier came spurring across the green-sward of the park, and over the iron-clamped drawbridge. He reined up in such haste that his horse's hoofs slid deep into the gravel of the pathway, and he had flung himself to his feet and up the steps into the hall, almost ere we had realised his presence.

"I carry you a message, colonel," cried he, saluting the expectant Clutterbuck. "The villagers at the park-gates tell me that the Pretender rode hither some hours since, and that he has not yet set forth again."

Then I did a thing which even to the end of my days I can only count as madness. I swung the colonel to one side of the hall and the trooper to the other, and I rushed from the oak-barred door, closing it with a slam behind me. I sprang to the horse outside, and would have turned its head to the drawbridge again—but in my haste I had forgotten the twenty troopers. They had witnessed the manner of their comrade's coming and the manner of my departure; and, being English and suspicious, they rushed with one accord to seize my bridle. I dashed my fist into the eyes of the nearest, and made vain endeavours to wrench my sword

BUT ERE HE COULD REPLY, A LAUGHING VOICE TURNED OUR EYES TO THE STAIRCASE.—p. 11.

from its scabbard. But my exertions proved futile, for they were upon me in numbers too overwhelming. Had I but planted my horse's hoofs upon the turf beyond, not all the English army should have reached me sooner than I had reached the grey old Canon Gate. Yet, here I was, hemmed in on every side, with the drawbridge itself slowly rising.

Just in the nick of time to save my skin, the hall door opened, and Colonel Clutterbuck appeared at the head of the steps. He burst into hoarse, pot-house laughter as he realised my predicament, and bellowed to his sergeant to bring me hither.

"By my faith, Captain Macintyre," cried he, "had I but your sinews and your courage, 'twere commander of His Majesty's army I should surely be. But had I your diplomacy, too, I fear me I should have swung on a bough ere this."

"That will you do without my diplomacy," I returned hotly.

"Nay, sir," said he, in tone less mocking, "you are scarcely wise in your retort. You have made a bold attempt to escape, and—have failed. That you make not such another attempt, I fain must place you on your word of honour."

"You choose the only method which is likely to hold me," I said coldly.

"Not so," he replied, with significant gesture, "I choose the one which I deem would be most pleasing to a Scottish gentleman. There are other methods of detention which are not the less more efficacious."

I stepped into the hall again, where Carnegie grasped my hand in silence. He himself was bowed with some illness, which rendered him useless as a man of action.

"I pledge you my word of honour that I will make no other attempt," I said sharply, turning to Clutterbuck.

He bowed with an amused smile.

"There is a certain amount of courtesy usually displayed under the circumstances," he remarked, "which so far I have failed to observe."

"Then I make bold to suggest that you observe it in the future," I retorted, for my anger was hot, and his graciousness was more than I had expected or deserved. He laughed outright this time.

"I refuse to quarrel, Captain Macintyre," said he; "I fear me that I might feel that grip upon my shoulder again." He turned to his sergeant with set face. "Sergeant Grendon," he ordered, "you will file six troopers into the Manor without delay."

Carnegie and I stood by the library door in silence utter and complete. For my own part, I felt sick at heart when I realised that my rashness had perchance sacrificed Prince Charlie to this English colonel. I could only hope that his hiding-place—God grant it might be secure!—would remain undiscovered until Lochiel, anxious for our return, sent forth a troop to escort us to the palace again. At any rate—and I gritted my teeth as I thought it—Charles Stuart should only be taken over the body of Macintyre of Macintyre.

The six troopers, their burnished scabbards trailing over the stone flags of the floor, filed into the hall and stood at attention before us. Clutterbuck drew his sword and faced Carnegie.

"Sir Thomas Carnegie," he said gravely, "you have heard the message that my sentry carries, and know yourself what truth may be therein. In the name of His Majesty, I ask you, on the honour of a Scotch nobleman, if Charles Edward Stuart be concealed in Scardray Manor?"

"Were it not more to the point to search?" said I, mainly to give Sir Thomas time to consider his reply. Colonel Clutterbuck wheeled round on me, his face paling with anger.

"By my faith!" he cried, "are you bent on making me regret that I have treated you as an officer and a gentleman?"

Then Sir Thomas Carnegie looked across at the officer from England, and in my heart, I knew that he would forswear himself, to save the boy whose father he loved. But ere he could reply, a laughing voice turned all our eyes to the staircase.

"Charles Edward Stuart saves you the honour of confessing, Sir Thomas, and places himself upon the leniency of Colonel Clutterbuck, of the King's Light Dragoons."

The troopers stiffened their backs; Clutterbuck's hilt flew to his forehead. For on the topmost stair stood a gallant arrayed in all the finery of his day; with shining silken hose; with powdered hair falling in a queue upon his shoulders. A merry light sprang to his eyes as the colonel raised his sword. He swung his feathered hat to the ground with courtly obeisance.

"Your Highness," said Clutterbuck in low tones, "I beg you to believe that had I been aware of your presence here, I would have marched my twenty men on Edinburgh itself, rather than on Scardray Manor. As it is, fate has thrown you into my hands, and my duty as a soldier points out the only course I may possibly pursue. I must detain you here for this one night, and deliver you to-morrow morning into the hands of General Cope, who, even now, is marching westward from Dunbar."

"I tender you my sword, Colonel Clutterbuck," came the soft reply, "and am proud to leave it in such good keeping. I would also offer you the word of Charles Edward Stuart, that he place himself upon parole, as Sir Thomas Carnegie and Captain Macintyre have done."

I stood silent in the hall in a state of bewilderment such as I have never experienced before or since. General Cope was marching on Edinburgh six days ere he was expected —probably in haste and taking such precautions as would prevent tidings reaching Holyrood Palace. Yet, even this surprise was rendered as naught by one greater and more totally unexpected; and above it a tender, surging love which had sprung to my heart that very day, and had increased tenfold in one brief moment. For the gallant on the staircase was Mistress Marjorie Carnegie!

HE BOWED LOW AS MARJORIE STEPPED FROM THE LIBRARY.—p. 12.

* * * *

Having reached this point of my story, where danger to Prince Charlie was for the moment averted, I feel somewhat loath to proceed, for fear that I may but indifferently relate the part in which I, myself, was not actually concerned, and did not actually witness. For whilst the manor was wrapped in the darkness of the night, and whilst silence reigned supreme, save for the heavy tread of the sentinels below, Marjorie's ready wit had again conceived the only solution to the difficulty in which we were each one placed, and her courage was already putting the idea into execution. For her own part, she will tell me nothing of what occurred, and I fain must imagine how she crept to the unguarded

stables below, that she might saddle her horse to ride to Holyrood Palace; how she rounded the whispering moonlit glen in terror such as man himself need not be ashamed to confess; how the way seemed endless, and the shadows of the roadside yet blacker with grim highwaymen; how she paused, irresolute, as she faced the Hunter's Bog, preferring instead to skirt the Salisbury Crags; and how she arrived, weary and bruised, at the palace gates, where Fergusson was captain of the guard. To this day, it is my delight to hear Fergusson tell the story of her coming. Bonnet in hand, he conducted her to Murray and Cameron, where, 'tween whispers and sobs, she spoke of Cope's advance, and the danger of Charlie—and Macintyre.

"'Fore Heaven!" roared Murray, "is Macintyre a man, that he sends a woman on an errand such as this?"

Then Marjorie's eyes flashed, and the colour mounted to her cheeks as she told how Macintyre had flung the colonel to the grey flags of the hall, and had made his dash into the midst of twenty stalwart troopers. Murray listened with the grim smile which seems to lose itself in the sternness of his eyes.

"I had sooner be Duncan Macintyre this moment," said he, "than wear the crown of twenty kingdoms."

* * * * * *

"GOD SAVE THE KING OF SCOTLAND!"

A flash of silver light was paling the horizon of the east, when the gallant Lochiel, with forty of his chosen clansmen, marched out to Scardray Manor. Despite the fact that Murray would fain have detained her, Mistress Marjorie insisted on accompanying the party, urging that she could lead them into the park by a little-known route and thus avoid meeting Clutterbuck's outpost-guards. So, with the dawn, the Highlanders came stealing through the trees, and had passed the drawbridge into the courtyard ere the alarm was raised. To this day, I cannot refrain from thinking that Clutterbuck was right pleased to see Cameron take possession, though he blustered mightily, and spoke with jeering tongue of "forty against twenty." His great red moustache curled more ferociously than ever; yet the humorous twinkle in his eyes plainly belied the roughness of his words. We stood in the hall again; he and I and Cameron, with Carnegie smiling grimly by the doorway.

"His Highness should be down ere now," quoth Lochiel in pleasant tone. Even as he spoke, Charlie sauntered easily from the gallery above, handsome and *débonnaire*, in the uniform of his Guards. We raised our swords to the salute; only Clutterbuck made no sign. He stood towering and erect; his legs extended; his arms folded on his chest.

"I'faith!" he exclaimed cynically, "Prince Charlies would seem to be as plentiful in Scardray Manor as the berries on the hedgerows outside."

"Yet not so easily plucked," retorted Charlie with a laugh. He bowed low as Marjorie stepped from the library, and she, curtseying in his direction, turned to the colonel with shyness in her eyes.

"Sir," she said in low tones, "I would beg you to forgive my deception, and to remember that it was only enacted to save Prince Charlie, who stands first in the heart of every true Scotchwoman to-day!" Clutterbuck stared down at her in amazement; then glanced to the staircase again. For a moment he made no reply, so great was his astonishment—and,

perchance, his admiration. We with our points to the raftered ceiling, stood around in silence. I noticed that the smile had even faded from Charlie's eyes, and that the knuckles of his hand grew white as ivory, as he gripped the balustrade by his side. The English officer drew himself to his extreme height. His face was a picture to witness.

"'Fore God!" he said softly; "if Charles Stuart have many adherents so sweet and loyal as Mistress Marjorie Carnegie, then Heaven send him to the throne of England right quickly!"

He drew his heels together with a click, and swinging his sword from its scabbard, he raised it to the peak of his helmet.

"God save the King of Scotland!" cried he.

A NATIVE festival brought us a week's holiday, and I was on my way to the Presidency to spend it there, when, on the train drawing up at a way-side station, I spotted Sparkes.

"Rot!" he exclaimed, when I told him of my intention. "You'll only waste a pot of money messing round. Join me—far healthier."

"What at?"

"In exploring Gittragiri; I've come here purposely," and he pointed to a solitary rocky hill, crowned by a fortification which simmered and slithered in the heat-haze a few miles to the north. "There's a bungalow, I'm told. We can make ourselves comfortable, and may get some shooting."

This decided me; so I bundled out—bag, baggage, and servants.

After lunching together in the waiting-room off we went, ordering our people to procure carts and follow with our "kit" as soon as possible.

It developed into a lonesome sort of place as we approached. The space within the fort appeared full of greenery, large trees overtopping the ramparts, but the sides of the hill were bleak and barren. After passing the small village at the foot, we ascended the zig-zag path and entered the fort by a large embattled gate. We found the bungalow comfortable, and the military pensioner in charge thereof intelligent and communicative. From him we learnt that the stronghold had been built in the sixteenth century, and that it stood thirty-three miles from the frontier of the Nizam's territory; that before the opening of the railway this and other bungalows on the route were frequently made use of by European travellers; but now, for some fifteen years past, no one, except perhaps a stray district official, ever came to the spot.

During the early part of the century, the Sepoy said, Gittragiri had been held by a detachment of native infantry, under English officers, against the incursion of Rohillas and other lawless predatories from the Nizam's country, and he indicated the ruined barrack that faced the bungalow. The aspect of the whole place chilled us to the marrow, and we stared about us in gloomy silence, till the arrival of our servants with a string of coolies bearing our *impedimenta* broke the spell, and we soon shook ourselves down in one wing of the bungalow, leaving the other vacant for possible—but by no means probable—*bona fide* travellers.

"Hang it all!" ejaculated Sparkes, as we took chairs in the verandah, "I was getting into the blues, weren't you?"

"Yes; there's a ghostliness about the spot that gives one the creeps."

"Let's pump the old Sepoy."

"What about?"

"This place; I can't shake off the feeling of uncanniness."

"Humbug!" I laughed. "There are no spooks here!"

Nevertheless he shouted for the old soldier.

"Any ghost stories connected with this fort, Sepoy?" I asked in the vernacular.

He grinned a deprecatory negative. "It is said that many fights have taken place here, sir, and the ignorant aver that the spirits of the slain people the hill, but I have never seen them."

"Fights between whom?"

"All sorts, sir; but especially between the British garrison and the Rohillas at the beginning of this century."

"And that's all, so far as ghosts and spirits go?"

"That is all, sir."

"There you are, Sparkes! Your ghostly fears are dead. Let's talk about something else."

We drifted into other subjects. Time wore on, our chat slackened into monosyllables, and finally we both dropped off to sleep.

* * * * * * *

"My aunt! What do you say to ghosts now?" uttered by Sparkes in panic-stricken tones aroused me, and I rushed after him into the room behind us.

"What is it?" I asked in an awed whisper.

"Ghosts, or something remarkably like them! Look!" and he pointed through the venetianed window.

I looked, and confess to a sensation of intense amazement as I saw the Sepoy escorting two European ladies, followed by several natives carrying various articles of luggage. English ladies apparently, in this out-of-the-way spot! They entered the empty rooms adjoining ours; and from their speaking English to the Sepoy we divined that they were strangers even to the country itself. We got hold of the old pensioner at the first opportunity, and learnt from him that while he was down at the village the strangers had arrived in a common bullock-cart, the driver stating that they came from Hyderabad. All they could say was "Gittragiri" interrogatively, and he had replied in the affirmative, whereupon they alighted, and he—as a natural consequence—brought them up to the bungalow. We were full of curiosity. One lady was elderly, the other young and pretty; mother and daughter probably—but what did they here?

"They're not spooks, at all events," muttered Sparkes. "Let's go and see them."

Writing our names on a piece of paper, and adding an expression of our readiness to be of any service, we sent it in by the Sepoy. Back came the paper with "Thank you, but we are not in need of assistance" written across it in a delicate feminine hand—that of a gentlewoman, no doubt. Still, the question hammered on our brains—what could possibly have

brought them to this corner of the earth with only one old woman servant accompanying them? We made all sorts of conjectures, but could not arrive at a satisfactory conclusion, or even a surmise. Strange and mysterious! We kept watch through the half-closed venetian; we heard their modulated voices in the next room, and in silence we held on to that window in hopes of catching another glimpse of them. Then the clatter of crockery betokened that they were breaking their fast; and presently both ladies came forth into the verandah, and looked about them. But if we had been amazed hitherto, we became utterly confounded by what followed. The elder lady, sweet-featured and grey-headed, carried a small, dilapidated book; and the younger, undeniably pretty, held a tape measure. They talked in low tones, frequently consulting the book, and glancing at the fort gate, a hundred paces or so to the right front. Now, donning their sun-hats, they went to the gate; the elder lady posted herself exactly in the centre of the archway with the tape-ring in her hand, while her companion, paying out, came towards a small building that had once been a solitary cell—evidently erected some time during our military occupation, and which faced the bungalow. They measured 300 ft.; another 25 ft. or so brought them to the cell front, and they marked the spot with stones. A further reference to the book, and they went to the granite figure of a bull that squatted more to the left. Commencing from the figure's nose, they measured towards the cell, but on reaching its back wall they were evidently at fault, for they came out into the open and gazed about as if perplexed; then, after whispering together, they ascended the steps and retired to their room. We stared blankly at each other. What meant those measurements? Who were they? What on earth were they after? We were soon to know.

In the cool of the evening we went outside and strolled about for a while, but the fair unknown kept within doors.

"Tell you what," whispered Sparkes, "they're women missionaries. Come to set up a tabernacle in the wilderness—going to run it themselves—they were measuring the ground for it!"

"Rubbish!"

"What, then, are they up to, footling round in a place like this with a book and a tape?"

"Impossible to say," I replied.

As we returned to go indoors I happened to glance up at the ladies' wing, when I distinctly saw two pairs of eyes regarding us through the venetians! Instinctively I raised my cap, Sparkes doing the same. We had barely sat down when the Sepoy brought a card, on which the same hand had written: "We are sure that you are gentlemen. Will you kindly accord us an interview?" I promptly wrote: "We are at your service;" and while the old man took back the card, we hurried out our easy-chairs and a couple of stools. Presently the ladies came forth. We exchanged bows. We drew forward the easy-chairs, and invited them to be seated.

"You must have thought us very unsociable just now," commenced the elder lady. "We imagined that we could get on by ourselves, but finding we cannot, and prepossessed with the glance we caught of you while you were outside, we have decided to confide in you, and beg your assistance."

"Madam, pray command us," I said.

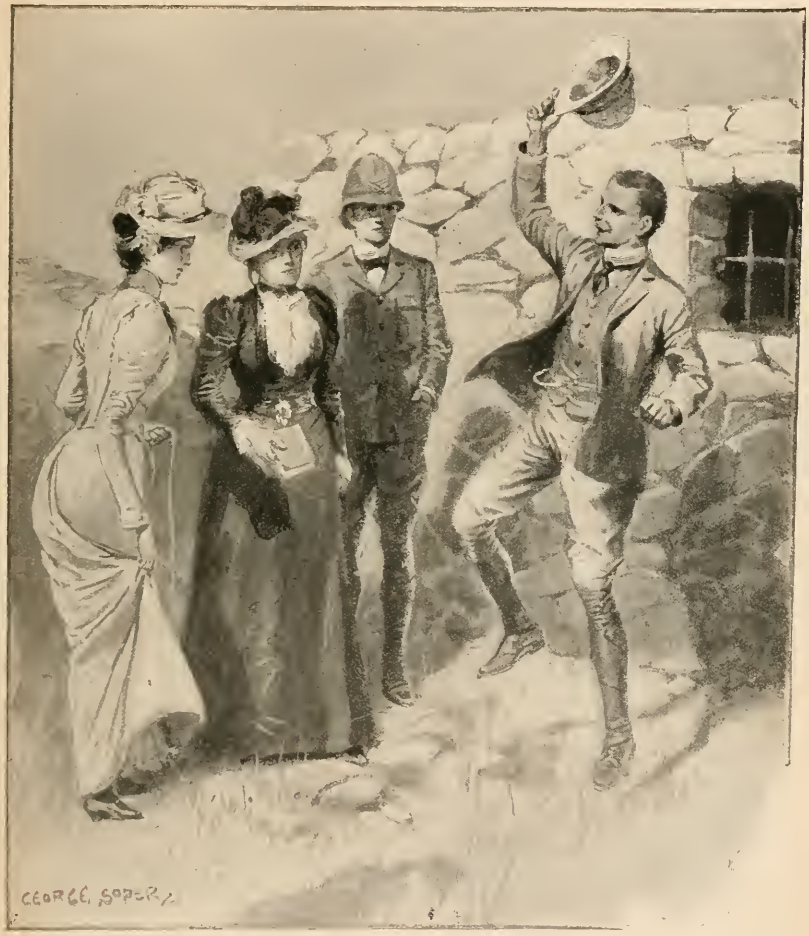
"I am Mrs. Kent," she continued, "and this is my daughter, Miss Grace Kent. No doubt you have been mystified about us."

"Candidly, we have," I observed.

"You're going to build a church, eh?" queried Sparkes.

"No," smiled the lady. "The fact is, we are in search of some money!" she added, lowering her voice.

"Where?" I gasped.



"I KNOW WHERE THE WELL IS!" ROARED SPARKES.—p. 20.

"Skittles!" ejaculated my chum in the same breath.

"Here. Read this," and she opened that small book—an old book of a bygone make, yellow with age. Stupefied, and hardly crediting our senses, we read—

Gittragiri Outpost,
Northern Circars,
7th May, 1812.

Assault expected this night; no hope of help from outside. In case I am killed, I hereby make this, my last will and testament. I adjure him who finds this book to deliver it to Arthur Burgoyne, now living with his mother, my wife, Mary Burgoyne, at No. 2, the Paragon, Bath, Somerset, England. I have secured my wealth in a coffer which, should the foe prevail, I will cast into the well, and thus preserve my gains for my rightful heirs should I die. In the coffer I have placed as hereunder—

My share of Seringapatam prize money, exchanged for gold mohurs	500 guineas.
My booty taken at Seringapatam. Precious stones	135 stones.
Necklace of honour presented to me by Tanjawur Rajah	1 necklace.
Great precious stones, taken from idol at storm of Kondagiri	31 stones.

The well may be filled up by the enemy after casting the killed therein, or it may be otherwise lost sight of. The finder of this book, therefore, must measure two lines—one of 327 ft. from the centre of the embattled gate; another of 223 ft. from the nose of the granite bull—and the point where these two lines meet is the centre of the well.

My name, as hereto subscribed, is cut on the lid of the iron coffer, with date, 1812; and among the contents will be found a bronze coin of the Roman Emperor Hadrianus—a fellow to which is with my wife.

God have mercy on us all!

JOHN JERMYN BURGOYNE, Captain Sepoy Infantry.

Witnesses { Philip Moore / Nathaniel Dobbs } Ensigns, Sepoy Infantry.

Our silence of stupefaction after perusing the above was broken by Mrs. Kent. "John Jermyn Burgoyne was my grandfather," she said. "His son Arthur was my father, as I will prove to you." At a sign from her mother Miss Kent brought out a packet of papers, and the elder lady showed us documents that convinced us of the truth of her statements. But the rest was mystery.

"Are you satisfied, gentlemen, as to the validity of the will, and my title to the inheritance?"

"Beyond a doubt, Mrs. Kent," I replied. "We are profoundly interested—pray enlighten us further."

"Do you mean to say that you expect to drop on the stuff here?" inquired Sparkes.

"Yes. Now for a few dates. My grandfather, the testator, was born in 1780; Arthur, his son, in 1802, in this country; he sailed for England with his mother in 1804. He entered the church, and married my mother in 1831. I, their only child, was born in 1832; I married in 1855; my daughter was born in 1856, and my husband was killed during the Indian Mutiny in 1857. Do you follow me?"

"Yes, but this will refers to sixty years ago—how has the matter remained dormant for so long?" I asked. "How do you know that the treasure has not been removed? What do you know of Captain Burgoyne's fate?"

"He was killed in the very attack referred to in the will; the East India Company officially reported his death. Presuming that he did throw the coffer into the well, all points to its being there still."

"Then how did you get possession of this book after sixty years?—where was it all that time?"

"It came to me by the veriest chance. A friend, a rich old Indian officer, picked it up during a raid that he had conducted against the descendants perhaps of these same Rohillas in 1859, somewhere on the Nizam's frontier. He never had the curiosity to look into the book,

which had lain, lost sight of for years, at the bottom of one of his old trunks. While turning out his belongings one day in search of something he wished to show me, he came across this book, and, handing it to me, described where, how, and when he had found it. Judge, though, of my surprise when I realised what that writing meant for me! To make a long story short, my friend not only strongly advocated this journey in quest of the treasure, but he generously furnished the necessary funds, for we were too poor to dream of the undertaking on our own means. So we came. Now, what do you think?"

"Think!" echoed Sparkes. "It sounds uncommonly like a fairy tale. But we'll roust out the box for you—if it's here."

"And it was these measurements we saw you making just now?" I asked.

"Yes; but we are at fault. We can neither get the points to meet, nor can we see any traces of a well. We lost hope till we saw you, and your appearance impressed us favourably. Will you help us?"

"With heart and soul!" I replied.

"Aye, that we will!" added Sparkes. "And that Roman coin of old What's-his-name? Have you got that handy?"

Mrs. Kent promptly produced the piece from her purse, and we set to examining it with absorbed interest. It was too late to do more that day, for darkness had come down as we conversed.

Early next morning we went to work. I and Sparkes measured and measured, but no amount of manipulation or coaxing would get those lines to meet. We tried from all parts of the gate—from all parts of the bull; but every attempt proved abortive. The ladies lost heart, and almost cried with vexation.

"I'm really afraid we must give it up," I said gloomily.

"Oh, don't say so!" pleaded Miss Kent. "Perhaps there's another gate and another bull somewhere in the fort."

The suggestion rekindled our hope; we summoned the Sepoy and questioned him. No, this was the only gateway, this the only bull; there were no traces of any well whatsoever in the fort; water had always been carried up from below as long as he could remember.

"Can't we search elsewhere?" murmured Mrs. Kent vaguely.

"Like looking for a needle in a bundle of hay," remarked my chum. "Those instructions are clear enough if we could only get the lines to meet. Let's try again, Hervey; perhaps we may hit on it after all. Come on with the tape!"

Once more we measured the 327 ft.

"That's plain enough, isn't it?" said Sparkes. "Now for the 223·4ft."

We laid that out, and found, as before, that the cell interfered with our joining the end of the first measurement.

"Well—I'm—blest!" exclaimed my chum in a tone of chagrin. "Old Burgoyne——"

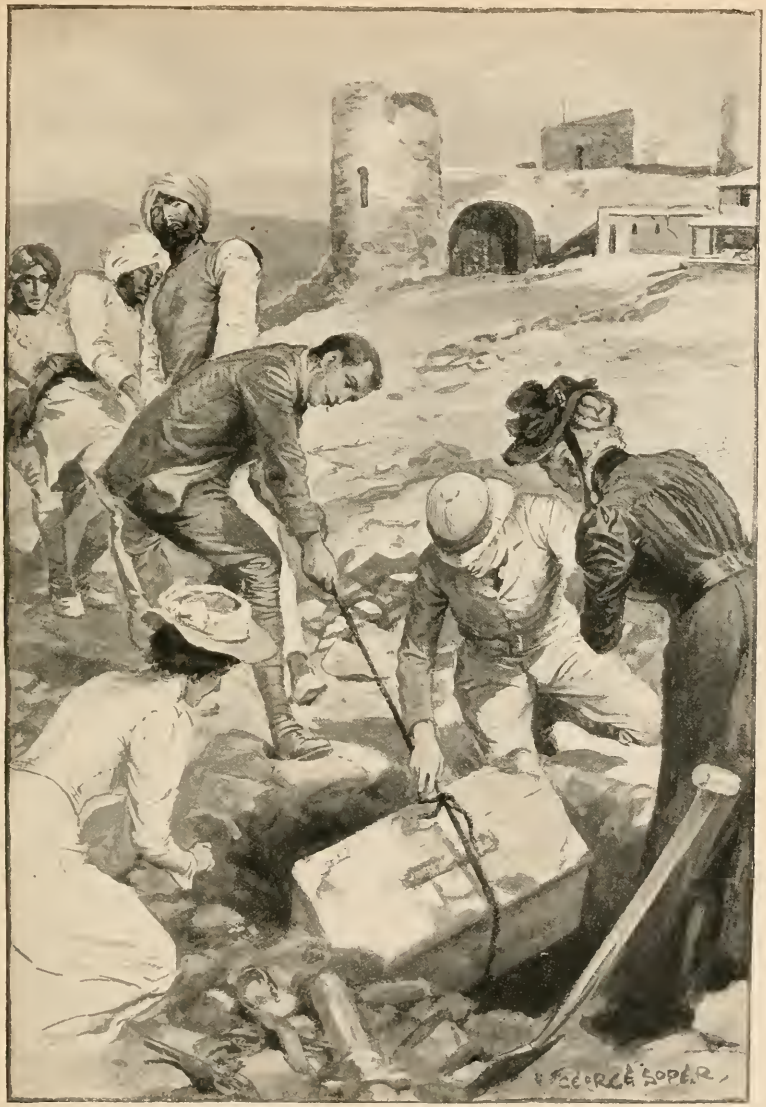
He suddenly stopped dead. As he spoke he had been regarding the cell with a rueful expression, but now he began dancing about, laughing loudly, and cutting capers all over the place.

"Needn't play the idiot!" I growled savagely, for I perceived that his vagaries were proving distasteful to our fair companions.

"No!" roared Sparkes. "I've been playing the idiot long enough! I know where the well is!"

"Where!" we ejaculated simultaneously, glancing in all directions.

"Here! Under this cell! I'll eat my hat if it isn't! Strikes me as being of more modern construction than those old barracks. Why, man, it stands to reason, from the very fact of the thing interfering each time with our measurements!"



"HAUL AWAY!" WERE THE NEXT WORDS. WE HAULED, AND IN ANOTHER MINUTE THE COFFER LAY AT OUR FEET.—p. 23.

A gleam of hope! I was struck with Sparkes' view. "Keep up your spirits, ladies!" I cried. "If the well ever existed we shall find it under this cell."

The Sepoy was sent flying down the hill for coolies, crowbars, ropes, baskets, and pick-axes. Stimulated by promise of reward, the old man speedily returned with a working party, armed with the necessary implements. The men set to work, attacked the cell, and soon razed it to the ground. Ordering them to spread out the *débris* so as not to form an obstacle to the tape, we again measured, when, sure enough, the two lines of 327 ft. and 223 ft. coalesced, almost to the inch, at the centre of the cemented floor of the cell! We hastily demolished this floor, and when the superincumbent rubbish and earth had been cleared away, our straining eyes rested on a circle of cut stone. We remained in doubt no longer; the well referred to by Mrs. Kent's grandfather lay before us!

In the seventh heaven of exultation we commenced to excavate. After attaining to a depth of 10 ft. we began to unearth all sorts of things—a small brass cannon which had burst at the breech; old flint-lock gun-fittings, the woodwork of which had long since mouldered away; silver and copper coins, which once might have been the property of the Sepoys who, meeting their death in the defence of the place, had evidently been thrown into the well by victorious Rohillas. Then we came across some officers' belt- and breast-buckles, which had doubtless once adorned the persons of Burgoyne and his colleagues when their bodies had been consigned to the same convenient receptacle. Finally we struck water, which considerably enhanced our labour. Baskets upon baskets of dripping earth were hauled to the surface. The men—there was only room for two—worked immersed to the knees; the yield gradually diminished, and at last they declared that they could dig no more. Somehow, we had not bargained for water, and again did we despair.

"Does it come in fast?" I shouted down the well.

"No, sir: slowly, but it prevents us from digging."

"Let's bale it out!" suddenly vociferated Sparkes. "Here you are!" and his long legs took him in a trice into the bungalow, to reappear almost immediately with the brass jugs from our bath-room.

Hurrah! Ropes were knotted round the jug-necks; down they went, and, after an hour's steady filling and hauling, the well was comparatively dry.

"Now," shouted Sparkes down the well, "you chap with the crowbar! Plunge it in as far as you can; see if you touch anything hard."

The strokes of the implement fell dull on our anxious ears. They appeared to meet with nothing harder than mud.

"Now try where you are standing!"

The man obeyed, and the very first stroke emitted the sound of metal against metal.

"There you are!" cried Sparkes. "The trick's done, I bet! Lug that out, whatever it is!"

With difficulty the earth was cleared away. We could see the men imperfectly in the gloom clawing and tugging at some object. It might be another cannon; our hearts were in our mouths.

"Let down ropes! It is an iron box!" bawled one of the men.

We complied.

"Haul away!" were the next words. We hauled, and in another minute the coffer lay at our feet! On washing away the mud from its surface, there, on the lid, precisely as recorded in that book, appeared the words: "John Jermyn Burgoyne, 1812," cut with a cold chisel and hammer by a hand that had been dead for a period of sixty-three years! We paid up the natives, and sent them away rejoicing; we conveyed the coffer into the Kents' front room, and when we had ensured ourselves against interruption or espionage from the servants, Sparkes

and I succeeded—after an infinity of difficulty, in forcing open the lid, for the coffer was locked, and, as my friend pithily observed, "Old Burgoyne had omitted to state where he had left the key!"

The contents were in confusion, and dulled to a degree; however, by dint of much scrubbing and washing, we cleaned and classified everything in that box; and then, comparing them with the inventory in the will, we found them to tally exactly therewith, even to the coin of Hadrianus, the very fellow to the one in Mrs. Kent's keeping.

"All's well that ends well," I observed, interrupting the reverie we had fallen into. "Mrs. Kent, Miss Kent, accept my warmest congratulations."

"I declare you'll be able to drive away in a coach-and-six!" added Sparkes.

"Our warmest gratitude is due to you both!" exclaimed Mrs. Kent, with tears in her eyes, as she pressed our hands in succession.

"Yes, indeed!" exclaimed the daughter, following suit. "But had it not been for your happy thought, Mr. Sparkes, we should not have succeeded. A kind Providence surely threw you in our way!"

"No! hang it all!" replied my chum, who was a bit of a fatalist. "Providence did not merely throw us in your way; there was an inevitable necessity in our dropping across each other as we have done. The whole affair has been cut and dried from the commencement of all things—the whirligig of time brought round our turn to play our parts in this little show. We were called, and we answered the summons—that's how I look at it."

"And now, Mrs. Kent, what are your plans?"

"Oh, to get home again. Thanks to a merciful God and the help of you, our kind friends, our mission to this country has been successfully accomplished."

"You have no call to go back to Hyderabad, have you?"

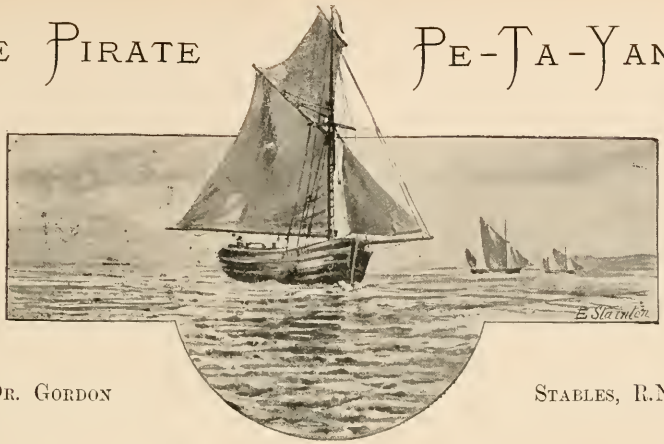
"Except to get to the railway."

"Not at all! You don't want to go so far. There's a railway station as if made for you a few miles from this; trust yourselves to us, and though the mail does not stop there, I'll pull her up for you."

Accordingly, the next day, Sparkes put the signal against the Bombay mail train, and we duly secured for our fair friends a first-class compartment. As the train moved, Mrs. Kent thrust a small packet into our hands. When we had made our final *adieux* we opened the packets and found them to contain a large ruby each, accompanied with a few written words of thanks from the fair donor.

Subsequently, when we had those stones valued, we were astonished to learn that they were worth several hundred pounds apiece.

The Pirate Pe-Ta-Yang



By Dr. Gordon Stables, R.N.

MANY months before the gunboat *Water Kelpie* left Plymouth on her outward voyage to the China seas, a beautiful yacht weighed anchor at Sydney, New South Wales, *en route* for China and Japan.

One evening, shortly after sunset, Lord Lever came down below, and after making a reckoning for some little time in the good old-fashioned way, with a school slate and pencil, he laid it aside and looked towards his wife with a smile.

"We should see land to-morrow, dear," he said.

She heaved a little sigh as she put down her book.

"I'm not so very pleased as you might think," she answered.

"Oh," he said, smiling, "we are some distance yet from Hong Kong; only I thought of touching at Formosa. But it is the Bashee Islands we ought to see, and I may send a boat on shore for fruit and flowers."

"Formosa," she repeated, as if to herself, "would it not be a pretty name for a child—a girl?"

"Yes, and it means 'fair' or 'lovely.' And this great island of Formosa is a veritable land of flowers and beauty, a land of wild woods and forests, too; a land of mountain and stream, and of high cliffs that hang beetling over the ocean depths, a sheer depth of five thousand feet and over.

"It is but little known, however—its interior, I mean—and hardy and brave would he need to be who explored it."

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Next morning both Lord Lever and his captain, Bromley, were on deck long before the stars had faded; before them was the slightest glimmer of the short dawn in the East. Both were in an unknown sea, though they, the Bashees, were not far off. So, though under steam, they had slowed down, and a man was in the chains. At a single word of command the engines would stop or back astern.

But daylight came on, the sky was clear and blue, and the sea was deep, with just one rocky island far away on the lee bow.

They forged ahead now with less caution, but a man was aloft in the foretop-gallant cross-tree, ready to hail the deck if he perceived ahead or on either bow the slightest change in the calm of the water which might indicate a shoal.

By twelve o'clock they were close up to one island, and more and larger ones were visible ahead in the weather bow.

True to his promise, Lord Lever stopped ship, and the gig was lowered. He went himself to steer and to find fruit and flowers.

The natives were a strange, yellow-skinned, unkempt crew, and hardly made him welcome, but they brought all he wanted, and he paid them in cloth and in tobacco, which they seemed greatly to prize.

As he was leaving for his boat, one man, who seemed a chief of some sort, drew him aside.

The fellow, who really was ugly enough to addle eggs, could speak no English, yet over and over again he pointed to the yacht and said, "Pe-Ta-Yang! Pe-Ta-Yang! Hoo—hoo!" Then he drew his hand like a knife-blade across his neck and shook his head mournfully.

Whether it was good news or bad Lord Lever could not say; it seemed a warning of some kind, at all events, so he gave the man an extra piece of tobacco. It was not until next morning that he remembered that little episode on shore.

A breeze had sprung up shortly after he had brought the flowers on board, fires had been bunked and all sail set once more; but now there was not a breath to ruffle the surface of the sea, and the *Esperanza* was going ahead easy, gently rising and falling on the smooth billows. Yonder goes a porpoise, slowly moving southwards, rising and falling, and followed by some birds, showing that land was not far off. There was a skipjack or two and some flying-fish. In the sky never a cloud, and the water all around might have been oil or glycerine, so glassy was it on the surface.

Lady Lever was down below. She sat by the piano playing some dreamy old air, as if the music were part and parcel of the thoughts that were within her.

A sudden startling hail from aloft.

"Land far ahead and a sail in sight!"

"Can just raise the land, sir, with the glass," added the man, on being further queried; "and the vessel looks like a yacht or something. Sails somewhat awry, sir. Looks as though summut was wrong."

"Keep your eye on her," was all that Lord Lever said.

But after a time the man hailed again.

Lady Lever herself had come up, and was looking somewhat anxious and interested.

"She is flying a flag of distress, sir—an English ensign too."

The captain himself came aloft.

"I'm a bit puzzled," he said when he came down. "Can see very few hands on deck. She is painted a blue-green colour, and difficult to see."

"But the flag?"

"Upside down. That's all right or all wrong. She's in trouble of some kind."

The course was at once altered a few points, and her speed was increased.

Lady Lever slid her arm through her husband's.

"Why, what is the matter, child?"

She was visibly trembling.

"Oh, it's only my nervousness, but old Timothy the bo's'n has been telling Susie awful stories of a pirate who sails these seas. His name is Peter Young."

"Peter Young! Why, that is somewhat like the words the man on shore spoke."

"Message-boy," he added sharply, "send Timothy here."

The old man could not have been far away, for he came aft instantly.

"May I go aloft, sir?" he asked eagerly.

"Yes, away you go!"

He was down very quickly again.

"That's Peter Young, shape and rig," he said, "though maybe not her colour."

Then Captain Bromley was consulted, and once more Lord Lever turned towards his wife.

"We cannot pass a ship that seems in distress," he said. "When we get nearer we'll stop, and I'll go aboard after hailing her."

"Not you, dear—oh, not you."

Lord Lever laughed.

"My dream," she cried, turning pale.

"Dear, foolish child," he said, and led her to her deck-chair. "Sit down; nothing can come over us. We are strong enough to fight a dozen Peter Youngs."

Lord Lever, however, made ready for any emergency, and his one good Gardner gun was manned and made ready. The crew were armed also. They were now within hailing distance, and the vessel was stopped, and lay idly rising and falling on the waves.

"Yes," replied a strong, manly voice. "We are in distress—mutiny. We have battened them below, but are not hands enough to work the ship. Can you assist us, or take us in tow to Takao?"

"That's Peter, sir, I'll go bound," whispered Timothy, as Lord Lever gave orders to lower the gig. "For God's sake don't, sir! Bear away as long as there is time."

"Timothy, go forward," said Lever, almost sternly. "I shall do as I should wish to be done by."

"Then Heaven have mercy on us, my Lord!"

Away sped the boat, and soon Lever himself was seen going nimbly up the ladder, followed by his men, one only being left in the boat.

Then a pistol was fired, and next moment the decks were crowded by as fierce and blood-thirsty a crew as ever yet has been beheld.

The fight was brief.

Lady Lever fainted when she saw her husband borne down before the ruffianly charge. And it was well, indeed, she did not see all that followed.

On this occasion Susie showed wonderful courage, and with the help of a boy managed to carry her mistress below and lay her upon the couch, sitting by her side and bathing her forehead, even until the bitter end—and that came soon and fast.

We must leave her here and go on deck.

Captain Bromley had taken charge, and was issuing his orders as quietly and coolly as if he had been the captain of a man-of-war.

For the time being he could not tell whether Lord Lever was dead or alive. He had disappeared; but for this uncertainty, that Gardner gun would have done deadly work on the decks of the pirate, and speedily swept them.

There was nothing, therefore, left but to run the *Esperanza* alongside, and board in the good old British style.

I am loath, indeed, to print my pages red, after the fashion that prevails in "penny dreadfuls"; still, the truth must be told. From the time, then, that Bromley ran the enemy aboard, and for well-nigh twenty minutes after, one of the most sanguinary battles raged ever seen in the Chinese seas.

No ordinary men were these that Bromley had to contend with—picked warriors every one of them, and every one of them, too, had a stake in the fortunes of their chief, Pe-Ta-Yang. They were bound to fight and conquer or to fail with him. From all I have learned from private accounts, this dreaded pirate had secret agents in every British seaport in the world. He knew

well what the *Esperanza* was, and who Lever himself was, and his object was not to kill him, but to keep him as a hostage or to be set at liberty only on the payment of the sum which he should demand.

It was for this reason that he had him taken below and secured just as the battle was commencing. As to his brave followers, all, saving the one man left in the boat, had a short shrift—"a sharp knife and a bloody waistcoat." Britons never fought better than they did on the battle-deck of this pirate. But against such odds they could not prevail. Captain Bromley himself was among the first to fall, shot through the head by Pe-Ta-Yang himself.

But the smoke of battle rolled away at last; the din, the shrieks of anger and pain, the clashing of swords and ringing of pistols died away over the slumbering ocean, and the silence that ever follows a fight took their place. Not a soul had been left alive belonging to the *Esperanza*, with the exception of the man Hunt, who had been left in the gig when Lord Lever boarded, and three others he had pulled round to the port side of the *Esperanza* and rescued when he saw that further resistance would be in vain. These three men had speedily lowered into the gig sails and mast, water and food. There were arms and ammunition already in her. Then they had pulled away directly out to sea without being even noticed.

They lay on their oars a good three-quarters of a mile off, and so silent was everything now that they could distinctly hear the stamping of men on the pirate's deck, and their voices, too, as they pitched their own dead and the dead and wounded of the *Esperanza* into the sea, where blue sharks in dozens were waiting to accord them a fearsome funeral.

The men had hardly spoken till now.

"God help the poor ladies!" said Hunt. "It'll be worse than death to them, and we can do naught. Lend us your baccy, Frank."

"There you be, Jim. But Lord be near us, I say! does it not just seem all like a nightmare?"

"Ah! Frank, it's wuss. We wakes from a nightmare and forgets it. Is there a man of the four of us, even should he be spared to grow old, that'll ever forget what *we've* seen? Hark!"

Scream after scream—they were almost maniacal—now rent the still air.

"Back!" cried Hunt, seizing an oar. "I cannot bear to listen to that; they are taking the ladies into the pirate ship. Let us die with them, men. We were cowards to leave."

But Frank laid his hand on Hunt's hard shoulder.

"Be calm," he said, "be calm. We could not help them by dying with them. By living we may. Yes, by yonder blue sky and the God who rules it, we shall avenge them!"

There was little more to wait for. Presently they might be seen. If so, they would be pursued, and the race would end in their being murdered if they lost it.

Towards evening a breeze sprang up, and as soon as the sun went down they stepped their mast, and bore away back in the same direction they had come.

"They'll make for their hiding-place now," said Frank, "and old Timothy—poor fellow, he's dead enough now—told me he could find the very hot-bed of piracy in this same Bashee group of islands."

As he spoke, the darkness that had so speedily fallen was lit up by a flickering blaze far down to leeward. It increased and increased and increased, till every yard and spar of the doomed *Esperanza* stood out clear amidst the leaping flames. By the light of the conflagration they could see a great dark object moving off in the same direction as the rolling smoke and shower of sparks, and they followed it.

'Twas the pirate's yacht under full sail.

The night was very clear, and towards morning the moon rose, so that the boat, with the heavy sail it carried, went dancing away over the water right in the wake of Pe-Ta-Yang.

Then gradually something dark loomed athwart the lee horizon, and swallowed up part of

the sky and wondrous stars. They thought it was a cloud at first, and expected a storm, but on they flew.

In an hour's time the pirate was lost to view. Then the sail was lowered and the mast unstepped. No more could be done.

Soon after the sun rose like a great blood orange in a yellow hazy horizon, and they noticed now that what they had taken for a cloud was a high and wooded island. But the pirate's craft was nowhere to be seen.

"That's the devil's nest, boys,' said Frank. "Well, we know the bearings of the *Esperanza*, and we can guess where she lies. Off we go now, men, before we're seen and seized."

They went on and on all that day, and did their best to keep a course directly north, or north with a bit of west in it. It was a long way even to Formosa, but they had brave hearts all, and the hope of bringing that pirate eventually to justice nerved and jollied them on.

They sadly needed some jollying on before all was done. The wind changed, and for two whole days and nights they drove before it, steering as directly as they knew how to. They were quite exhausted at last, however, for that which was but a breeze at first had increased to half a gale, and baling out had to be constant to prevent the frail boat from sinking.

Death, they considered, was but a measurable distance ahead, but still they struggled on.

Fortune favours the brave, and about an hour before sunrise on the second dark night, and when they had all fallen into an uneasy kind of doze, they were suddenly awakened by a rushing noise and shouting.

Lights flashed in their eyes, and they started up shouting in turn.

In a quarter of an hour after this their boat was hauled up, and they themselves were safely on board a British steamer bound for Hong Kong. Soon they were telling their wonderful story to the captain and his wife.

All were so ill, however, after landing at Hong Kong, that two whole months elapsed before Hunt or Frank were in a position to be taken on board the *Water Kelpie*, which by this time had arrived prepared for action, and ready to take up the clue to the whereabouts of the daring pirate Pe-Ta-Yang.

* * *

For one whole month the *Water Kelpie* cruised about in search of the pirate. Both Frank and Hunt were

ROSS GOT HIM INTO SHELTER.—p. 31.

on board, but their recent illness had caused them to forget almost everything except the awful massacre of the officers and crew of the ill-fated *Esperanza*.

They had visited every isle in the group, and had boat-sailed round many of them, but all in vain. Hardly an hour of the day passed that either Hunt or Frank was not aloft on the outlook.

They chased and boarded many a junk, but unavailingly, and the first thing that everybody said to everybody else on meeting at breakfast in the snug, wee wardroom was—

"Any signs of Peter?"

This came to be a byword, and really Lieutenant-Commander Lindsay was beginning to think that the men had somehow or other been labouring under a delusion.

But one morning came an excited shout from the foretop—

"On deck there!"

"Aye, aye," cried Tom, whose watch it was; "is it you, Hunt?"

"Yes, sir; and yonder's the green-blue pirate, sure as life, under all sail, sir, and bearing up for the island three points on the port bow."

Tom rushed to ring up the engine-room.

"Prepare for a race. Go ahead with safety, but as quickly as you can move her."

"If the wind keeps, she may baffle us yet," said Lindsay to Tom half-an-hour after this. "See, she is nearly doubling the point. Put another man in the chains; I'm up to the dodges of these devils."

"Peter Young," he continued, shaking his fist at the chase, "you think we'll try to cut you off, don't you, and get on shore, but you'll be disappointed for once."

The pirate yacht was evidently of lighter draught and less unwieldy than the *Water Kelpie*, but the latter got round the point safely, and it was noticed that the former had hauled his wind and belt.

Nearer and nearer crept the sloop. All hands were on deck and the excitement was intense.

"I think I can hit her now, sir," said the gunner, saluting the Commander, who was on the fo'c's'le.

He patted his darling gun as he spoke.

"You'd like to expend a shot, eh, Mr. McReady?"

"Ready, aye, ready, sir," said the gunner, smiling grimly, "and the shot don't cost us much, do they, sir? John Bull ain't mean when his hand gets inside that sweaty old sock, you know."

"McReady, you may fire."

McReady did make ready, and he fired, too, with such precision that the splinters from the pirate's bulwarks flew upwards and tore her sails.

Down went her flag—no, not the black one with the skull and cross-bones. That emblem is only used upon the stage.

"She has surrendered," cried Tom.

But Lieutenant Lindsay viewed the pirate's action in quite a different light.

"She doesn't like our six-inchers," he said calmly. "She'll fight at close quarters."

The pirate had hauled her fore-yard aback.

"Surrender!" cried Lindsay, as soon as the *Water Kelpie* got within hail. "Surrender, or we'll blow you out of the water!"

A puff of white smoke from the pirate's quarter-deck—smoke with a bright sharp tongue in the centre that could be seen even in the sunlight—proved that Pe-Ta-Yang carried modern guns.

Several of the *Kelpie's* men were wounded, and poor Lindsay fell fearfully gashed at Tom's

feet. Ross had him in charge almost instantly, but he had spoken his last sentence and given his last command on a man-o'-war.

Tom was now in charge, and bravely indeed did he issue his orders.

The action became general now.

The pirate's flag was floating at the peak once more and his guns were keeping up a fearful cannonade.

But the numbers of her men hampered her, and when one of McReady's shells burst inside her, right amidships, the crew came rushing on deck, but only to be mowed down unmercifully before the fire of the Gardner guns.

One of the masts fell with a crash and she listed over considerably, so that her guns could no longer be brought to bear upon the *Kelpie.*

"Surrender now!" cried Tom.

"Never while I live!" cried the pirate. He fired his revolver three times in quick succession, and Tom felt a smart pain in the left shoulder.

The blood was pouring over his fingers from his coat-sleeve, and, while the battle still raged, Ross got him into shelter, tore off the coat, and quickly bound up the wound.

"Come below," he said.

"No, let me go back at once to duty."

"Bravo, then, my lad, you're a true Briton! Drink that."

Tom swallowed a mouthful from Ross's flask. It was the strongest brandy, but might have been cold tea for anything the plucky young fellow knew to the contrary.

The pirate was seen to be on fire now, and at that moment Pe-Ta-Yang fell.

Next, down went the flag, and the officers of this terror of the sea threw their arms, not down, but overboard. Boats were now lowered with all speed to save the wounded from a worse fate than justice intended for them. Tom himself was the very first to board the burning ship.

Her decks were a complete shambles—a sight that was sickening in the extreme. In their agony the wounded men, some with shattered legs, others with apparently their lower jaws torn completely off, lay tossing and tumbling on their backs, waving their arms wildly in their agony and looking pleadingly at the boarders, calling not for mercy, but to be put out of pain.

But a more terrible sight was beheld by Tom further aft. Here lay Pe-Ta-Yang himself, severely wounded, and wallowing in his own blood and in that which flowed from his comrades.

But his aim was a fixed and determined one. He was wriggling and crawling painfully inch by inch, pausing only when a spasm seized him, towards the rail to precipitate himself into the sea.

It was horrible!

But even in the midst of horror, or side by side with it, often comes humour, and now Hunt himself advanced and coolly fastened a rope with a clove hatch around the fallen pirate's body and attached the end to a ring-bolt.

"'Skuse me, Peter," he said, "for bein' so unmannerly; but you haven't got to go just yet. There's a drum-head court-martial to come off and a bit o' hanging to be done. You won't mind me makin' of ye fast, will ye? Any other little attention ye'd like s'long's I'm about it, eh?"

The prisoners and the wounded officers were being taken out when the vessel began to lurch uneasily. There was a rush to the side of the burning ship. It was *sauve qui peut* now. Some of the *Kelpie's* men actually threw themselves into the water as the vessel began to sink. And yet there was time. Tom was the last to take to the boats.

But Hunt had cut the pirate's lashing. "Ye'd like to sink wi' yer old craft, wouldn't ye?"

The pirate struggled like a wild cat, but Hunt called assistance and he was lowered away with a rope's end into the boat.

Then down went the terror herself with all on board.

It was perhaps just as well that the prisoners were but few. Ross certainly did not want extra work, only it was his duty to do his best for the wounded even of the enemy.

But there was much to be done yet; and Tom, now in command, buried poor Lindsay next day, Edgar reading the burial service.

* * * * * * *

They found the entrance to the pirate's nest at last, though no prisoner could be prevailed upon to give them the slightest clue.

Here were ten piratical junks in all, and they prepared to give battle in their own way, never dreaming that their bold leader was a prisoner in the hands of their bitterest enemies, the British.

The pirate's house was up yonder, and fearful that the Lord Lever and the ladies might be slain when the guard over them should see the fate of the junks, Tom landed Edgar and ten marines with orders to steal a march through the woods and attack the house from the rear.

EVERY JUNK WAS SENT TO THE BOTTOM BY THE *WATER KELPIE.*

They took with them a flag, which was to be hoisted on a corner minaret as soon as the work was accomplished; and Tom gave a sigh of real relief when he noticed the red bunting streaming out prettily against its background of woodland green.

Meanwhile, the junks were surrounding him, determined to crush him by numbers.

No mercy was to be looked for on either side, and none was given.

Every junk was sent to the bottom, and the fellows on board—madmen they seemed to be—went down cheering, unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown.

Well, Edgar had done his duty with great skill and with an energy I have never known excelled. When he rushed in so unexpectedly, he had a sharp fight of it at first, but his brave marines cleared everything before them, and quickly took the castle. Indeed it was a real case of Jack the Giant-Killer *redivivus.*

Lord Lever, his wife, and her maid were soon safe and sound on board the *Water Kelpie,* and all were *en route* for Hong Kong.

The SECRET of the IDOL

BY W. MURRAY GRAYDON

AN UNPLEASANT surprise was in store for Luke Tearle, agent and manager to London's largest dealer in wild animals, when he came down one morning to Hans Goldbeck's emporium at Wapping, near the Tower Bridge. He arrived at an unusually early hour, for a couple of important consignments were to be made ready and shipped that day. He unlocked the door of the private office, entered the room, and saw before his eyes unmistakable evidence of a nocturnal visit. In the middle of the floor a pyramid, composed of a large table, a smaller one, and an arm-chair, towered to within four feet of an open skylight overhead. An ordinary pocket-knife, with its single blade snapped off at the hilt, lay near the fireplace. Otherwise the room was apparently undisturbed. Neither the desk drawers nor the safe had been tampered with, and a fresh box of cigars was unopened.

"It's a queer business," said Hans Goldbeck, who turned up within a few minutes of his assistant. "The fellow seems to have been scared off before he got to work. Hullo, what's this?"

As he spoke he drew open the door of an upright glass cabinet that stood in the corner, the shelves of which were filled with all sorts of rare and valuable curios, from a string of Aztec beads to the preserved head of a Carib Indian.

"The lock has been forced," he added. "That accounts for the broken knife. But there is only one thing missing—the little gold idol."

"You mean the Ashanti fetish," said Tearle. "Nothing else?"

"That's all. But the idol is gone, right enough; and I fancy I know who stole it. You remember the chap who dropped in yesterday morning—Vanberg he called himself? He palavered for an hour about buying some bears for a travelling menagerie, and promised to return to-day, which he won't do. For that case caught his eye, and he gave it half his attention while he was here. Yes, Vanberg is the thief."

"I am inclined to agree with you. Yet why would he be satisfied with the idol?"

"That's the queer part of it," replied Goldbeck. "He could have stuffed his pockets with things equally valuable, or more so."

"I took a good look at the man," said Tearle. "He was a German, and his skin had the peculiar and unmistakable yellow tint left by West African fever; which is, at least, a suggestive coincidence."

"How so?"

"Because that diminutive idol came from the Gold Coast, as you are aware. A Haussa soldier picked it up in the forest a year ago near the borders of Ashantiland, and shortly after the British troops entered Coomassie and dethroned King Prempeh. I bought it from the Haussa at Cape Coast Castle."

"I don't follow your reasoning," said Goldbeck. "The affair is wrapped in mystery. Suppose we look about outside? We may make some fresh discovery."

But no clue of importance was found, though it appeared that the thief had scaled a gate, reached the office roof by climbing over a shed, and then lowered himself through the skylight. Of the two watchmen, one had heard nothing, while the other had spent the night in the big warerooms containing the caged wild beasts. The matter rested there, for Hans Goldbeck decided not to put it into the hands of the police. But Tearle, whose curiosity was deeply roused, cherished a hope that some day the mystery would be cleared up.

"The Ashanti fetish was stolen for a purpose," he told himself. "It possessed some power—some secret—that was known to the thief, or was suspected by him. I wonder if the thing could have been hollow."

* * * * * * *

Three months have elapsed. In far distant Coomassie, under the fierce rays of the African sun, a couple of bronzed Englishmen were threading their way one afternoon through the mass of ebon humanity that well-nigh choked the market-place. The spacious enclosure, lined with booths and stalls, and opening into narrow streets of wattle huts, resounded with strange, harsh cries. Here and there, amid the ferocious-visaged Ashanti warriors, strutted a brace of, Haussa soldiers or Gold Coast Constabulary—mute witnesses to the altered condition of affairs. For since the banishment of King Prempeh, and the installation of a British Resident, peace and honest government prevailed in Coomassie.

"You saw that chap who just passed us?" John Garthorn said to his companion. "He is a German, Adolph Becker by name. He used to trade in these parts, and it was rumoured that he dealt in black ivory. He disappeared some time ago, and last February—when I ran across him in Liverpool—he called himself Vanberg. Now he is back in his old haunts again."

"Vanberg?" exclaimed Luke Tearle, with a start of surprise. "What is he doing here?"

"I don't know," replied Garthorn. "His camp is in the neighbourhood, and he has a lot of Fantee niggers in his pay. Several times, before you arrived, I caught him lurking about my place. On the last occasion he dropped this. What do you make of it?"

Tearle examined with interest a fragment of coarse blue paper, three inches square, scrawled over with hieroglyphics that roughly suggested the inscription on an Egyptian obelisk.

"It is a native drawing," he said, "and looks to have been traced in blood. You are sure the man Becker lost it?"

"Well, I picked it up where he had been standing," Garthorn replied.

"May I keep it?"

"If you like—certainly."

Tearle was silent and thoughtful during the three-mile walk to the camp, which was north-west of Coomassie, in the cool shelter of the forest. An area of 400 square yards, lying between a sluggish stream of water and the rocky base of a hill, was surrounded by a high stockade with a gateway. On entering the enclosure one saw to the right the negroes' quarters, and on the left two wattle huts of better construction. In one of these the Englishmen slept, and the other was packed with the fruits of Garthorn's judicious bartering—ivory, gum-copal, monkey-skins, rubber, and palm-oil. In the rear were two stout cages, containing a rhinoceros and a pair of superb lions. In the middle of the space a clump of trees grew by a large boulder of peculiar shape.

The animals were Tearle's property. Having come up-country a week previously, he had gladly consented to share quarters with his old chum Garthorn, the trader, who kept a permanent camp near Coomassie. At the present time, besides the Englishmen, there were only two negro servants here. Johnson, Tearle's white companion, was a dozen miles away, with a number of native assistants, constructing traps and pits for the capture of wild beasts.

When supper was over, and the night had fallen darkly, the negroes squatted by a fire of logs near the open gateway. Garthorn lit his pipe, and presently began to shake with a chill.

"It's the confounded malaria again," he groaned.

He crept to his bed in the hut, and Tearle threw a blanket over him, and gave him a stiff dose of quinine. "That will knock out the fever, old man!" he said.

"Yes, I'll be all right in the morning," Garthorn assented.

Five minutes later Tearle was standing by the boulder in the middle of the camp, the mysterious bit of blue paper in one hand, and in the other a flaring wax vesta.

"There is certainly a resemblance," he said to himself. "It is a wild and improbable theory, and yet there is reason to think——"

A low, eager cry just then interrupted his thoughts, and glancing round he saw that the negroes were on their feet, in attitudes of alarm. He hurried towards them, and was half-way to the fire when six dusky figures swarmed through the gateway—five stalwart Fantees headed by Adolf Becker. The German levelled his rifle.

"Hands up, my friend!" he commanded fiercely. "Quick! or I'll put a bullet through you."

Tearle, unarmed and helpless, was trapped like a rat. "You scoundrel!" he cried in a passion. "I know your game."

"So much the better—it saves explanation," Becker retorted.

"You are Vanberg the thief! It was you who stole the Ashanti fetish!"

The German laughed sneeringly. He had chosen his time well, and was master of the situation. Garthorn, crawling forth to see what was wrong, was promptly seized and tied at the wrists. Tearle was secured in a similar manner, and then both were thrust into the hut, from which all firearms were first removed. Two of the Fantees squatted outside the low doorway, and the other three stood guard over the trader's terrified negroes. Meanwhile the strong gate of the stockade had been closed and barred against possible intrusion.

Garthorn was burning with fever, and was almost indifferent to what had happened. Tearle's outburst of rage had cooled down a little, and he did not utterly despair of turning the tables on his wily foe. His shrewd mind revolved one thing and another, while he ventured an occasional peep at Becker, who was now digging with a spade at one corner of the boulder, with a burning torch stuck into the ground at his side.

"He shan't carry off the prize, if I can help it," Tearle muttered.

Five minutes slipped by. The German dug hard and fast, and the heap of excavated earth mounted steadily. An occasional roar, or a deep-throated grunt, told that the caged animals were unusually alert. Tearle smiled as he heard them, and suddenly he rolled over close to his companion, and breathed a few whispered words of instruction. Garthorn turned, bringing his wrists where they were wanted by Tearle, who speedily bit through the thin strands of rope that confined them. A moment later his own arms were free.

"There you are," said Garthorn. "What are you going to do?"

"Can't stop to explain now," Tearle whispered.

"I'm not fit to help you, old man!"

"I don't want you to, except by shoving those two chests against the doorway directly you hear me shout. And that's for your own safety."

"HELP! HELP!" HE CRIED HOARSELY.

"I'll do it."

"It must be sharp work. Hush! I'm off now."

In the side of the hut remote from the fire was a small window. Tearle climbed through it noiselessly, and dropping to his hands and knees, he crept across to the stockade. In the semi-darkness he gained the rear of the enclosure, and stood for a moment within a couple of feet of the imprisoned lions. He looked back to see the crouching groups of negroes—to see Becker digging away as if his very life depended on the task.

"It will be a costly sacrifice," he thought; "but it is the only chance of outwitting that scoundrel!"

There was a creaking, rattling noise as Tearle drew back the sliding door of the cage, and as quickly, with a lusty shout of warning he darted behind the structure. The lions, who were uncommonly bad-tempered brutes, did not hesitate an instant. Seeing the way to freedom open, they bounded, with angry roars, down the enclosure.

The scene that followed was both ludicrous and tragic. Becker dropped his spade and climbed in hot haste to the summit of the boulder, from which dubious vantage he pulled

HE UNEARTHED A BULKY OBJECT, WRAPPED IN A LEOPARD-SKIN.—p. 38.

himself to the limbs of a tree that was within reach. One of the lions stopped underneath, and the other plunged on. The negroes, captives and captors, scattered in terror. A couple of the Fantees flung away their firearms and scrambled like cats to the roof of the sleeping-hut. Two more, with the trader's two blacks, ran for the stockade. They gained the look-out platform, recklessly scaled the pointed piles, and vanished from sight.

The remaining Fantee, poor wretch! was too paralysed with fright to imitate his comrades. The lion pounced upon him, seized him by the breast and throat, and with blood-curdling snarls worried him for a moment or two. The agonising screams of the man quickly ceased, and then, abandoning his dead or dying victim, the great beast slunk off into a dark corner of the enclosure.

Meanwhile the other lion, having leapt vainly at the branches of the tree, sprang to the top of the boulder. He glared up hungrily with fiery eyes. Becker was only a few feet overhead, and in a position of imminent peril.

"Help! help!" he cried hoarsely, appealing to the Fantees on the hut. "Slip down and get your guns—shoot the brute! Now is your chance! Do you hear, you cowardly dogs? Quick, or I'm a dead man!"

"That's what you deserve to be, you scoundrel!" Tearle shouted from the roof of the cage, where he had taken refuge. "All right, Garthorn?"

"Yes!" came the muffled response.

"Well, stay where you are, and keep the doorway blocked. I'll tell you what to do when the time is ripe."

For two or three minutes the situation was unaltered. The roaring of the lions—the one was still invisible—echoed far through the forest. The Fantees jabbered and moaned, and Becker, despairing of any help from them, kept shouting at the savage animal crouching below him, in the hope of scaring it away, or preventing it from leaping into the tree. The bellowing and snorting of the rhinoceros, who was stamping excitedly about his cage, added to the din.

"Try to get the guns, Garthorn," Tearle called to him, during a brief interval of quiet. "A couple are lying just outside the door."

But the Fantees heard and understood the words, and one of them mustered up sufficient courage to drop to the ground and snatch a rifle. He aimed hurriedly but well at the lion on the boulder, and with the loud report the brute came to earth. A few convulsive struggles and it lay motionless.

"It's time I was taking an active hand," Tearle concluded.

But just then something occurred to change his mind and keep him where he was. The rhinoceros, goaded to madness by the crack of the rifle and the smell of the powder, charged with the utmost fury against the end of his cage. He split the stout wooden bars, forced them apart, and squeezed his huge bulk through. At that instant Becker, rid of his dangerous enemy, had ventured to slide down the trunk of the tree. He saw the great horned beast galloping straight towards him, and with a yell of terror he fled, forgetting the immediate shelter of the boulder.

Excepting this, the nearest place of refuge was the hut that contained the trader's goods. The German scrambled to the roof, and about four seconds later the rhinoceros went through the hut from side to side, playing havoc with the contents, and leaving the structure a wreck. Becker was pitched to the ground, and as he rose the angry quadruped wheeled round and charged him, grunting viciously. The unfortunate man was knocked down, gored and trampled upon, and that his enemy did not turn again to finish him was due to the surviving lion, who suddenly appeared on the scene and attempted to creep by the rhinoceros. The latter made a rush, the lion met it with a spring, and at once the two animals were engaged in a furious combat.

This gave the two Fantees a chance to escape, and, unbarring the gate, they fled from the enclosure. Garthorn crept out of the hut and joined Tearle on the roof of the empty cage. From a distance they watched the thrilling fight, until it was brought to a close by the lion bolting through the gateway, with the rhinoceros in hot pursuit.

"There go a few hard-earned pounds," Tearle said bitterly. "But I don't altogether regret it; we have won a richer prize instead."

"What do you mean?" asked Garthorn.

"I'll show you presently. We had better take a look at that rascally German first."

Even as he spoke, without the slightest sound or warning, a dusky horde of men swarmed into the enclosure. They were Ashanti warriors, at least a score in number, and armed to the teeth. The band stole cautiously forward, peering right and left, and at length they caught sight of the excavation at the base of the big stone. They gathered round the spot, and while one of the Ashantis fanned the nearly consumed torch into a blaze, another wielded the spade vigorously. In three minutes he unearthed a bulky object, wrapped in a leopard-skin, and when he held it up to view a storm of triumphant yells and cries rent the air. The Englishmen had been looking on curiously from their hiding-place.

"What have they got there?" whispered Garthorn.

"Without doubt," replied Tearle, "it is the famous Golden Stool of Coomassie—the

emblem of royalty, that has descended from king to king, and which the natives regard as sacred."

"I knew it had disappeared at the time of Prempeh's downfall," exclaimed Garthorn. "But how did it get here?"

"That is a long story," Tearle muttered savagely. "We're in hard luck to-night, old chap! We turned the tables on the German, and now these black scamps have outwitted us."

"I believe they are going without further search."

"So they are. Hush—not a sound! Discovery would mean a short shrift and no mercy."

The danger passed. Several minutes later the enclosure was deserted, and the clamour of the retreating Ashantis had died away in the depths of the forest. There was nothing more to be feared, so Tearle and Garthorn left their shelter. The trader's damaged goods, the ruined hut, two valuable animals fled, one dead Fantee, and a dead lion—such was the dismal record of loss. This did not include Becker, who was suffering from severe bruises and a deep wound in his thigh. He was unconscious when found, but a dose of brandy revived him, and he was able to talk.

"I may as well make a clean breast of it," he said in a sullen voice, scowling at Tearle, "since you seem to know so much. It's a short story. For a year or two before the trouble broke I was a sort of adviser to King Prempeh, and I was pretty thick also with his favourite minister, Kalcalli. When the British troops came and captured the King, I thought it best to light out, and Kalcalli and I fled together. He had previously buried the golden stool by the King's command, and I had reason to believe that he had drawn a rude map of the spot, which he carried concealed in a gold fetish that he wore about his neck. I intended to rob him—I admit that—but, unluckily, Kalcalli lost the fetish, and the next day he was speared by a native of a hostile tribe. I escaped to the coast, and some time later I learned that the little idol had been found by a Haussa soldier. On coming to England I discovered by chance that it was in Hans Goldbeck's collection of curios. You know the rest. I stole the cursed thing and found the chart, which was tucked away in the hollow interior and cunningly plugged up. To locate the right spot was a more difficult task; but I succeeded in the end, though it took a lot of prowling about your camp. But for one of my own niggers, who must have blabbed the secret in Coomassie, I should have carried off the loot, and been rich for life. It's hard lines!"

"You don't deserve any sympathy, my man!" was Tearle's comment.

There is little more to relate. None of the raiding party of Ashantis were ever identified, in spite of the strenuous efforts of the Resident, and in what new place they concealed the King's golden stool—the prized and sacred emblem of Ashanti royalty—is unknown to this day, though the matter has recently been brought afresh to public attention.

Adolph Becker, *alias* Vanberg, ultimately recovered of his injuries, and succeeded in escaping one night from the trader's camp; he is supposed to be now in the interior of Africa. Tearle's trapping expedition turned out well, and, in due course, he landed a fine cargo of wild animals at the Wapping docks. He also brought with him the golden idol—he took it from Becker's pocket—and it occupies its old place in Hans Goldbeck's cabinet of curios.

The Baby of the 40th Dragoons.

By Duncan McLaren.

ARNOLD BEAUCHAMP stood in the old Spanish hall waiting patiently for orders. Sir John Moore was making his retreat on Corunna, a retreat which, masterly though it was, cost the lives of hundreds of our brave men. To Arnold Beauchamp the few minutes' rest in the ill-warmed hall seemed like a glimpse into heaven after the hardships he and his men were undergoing, but even though it was soon over the young soldier was able to pull himself together and face the still sterner duties that lay before him the better for the lull.

As he waited he could hear the crack of musketry, sometimes faint but ever increasing, as the pursuing French drew nearer and nearer, and it was not long ere his colonel came out of the room where he had been getting his instructions, and Arnold and he mounted and rode back to their men.

The hall in which the General had waited a few hours was on the side of a mountain, high up, while deep down below lay a turbulent river, spanned by a small bridge. The English army were already across it, but a squadron of dragoons and a few riflemen were stemming the further advance of the French, so as to give time for retreat in good order.

Snow was in the air though as yet only a few flakes had fallen, but the men knew that a heavy fall was coming. Arnold was in charge of the men who were to fall back last of all from the bridge, a position of much danger and needing great judgment and nerve.

Five minutes too much delay meant death to every man of his rear-guard, while too little time involved the abandoning of guns and perhaps the death of women and children.

Small wonder that the young dragoon's face was stern and sad beyond its years as he watched the advance of the serried lines of the French, who at present were forced to keep their ground on the other side of the bridge.

HE BENT FORWARD AND LISTENED.—p. 43.

The hours passed by and with them came the snow until the ground was white, and still it fell. Horses and men alike were nearly numb, but the young officer had calculated the time that must be given before the rear-guard retreated, and to that he kept. At length it arrived, and the little force began to fall back, bringing their wounded with them and taking advantage of every rock and tree to pick off one of the enemy. Was it any wonder that the French army fretted itself in vain against those steady British riflemen and cavalry who contested every inch of ground with their foes?

The storm was still raging two days later when Arnold was again in charge of the rear-guard. All night he had sat his horse, an immovable figure in spite of the driving sleet and the bitter wind. He was absolutely the last man between the two armies. His soldiers were a mile or two further on, and had orders to get what food they could in a small village, and if possible snatch a few hours' sleep. Arnold knew it was most improbable that the enemy would be on the move that awful night, and he determined to give his men the chance of a little rest while he could, and it could only be done by he himself keeping guard. He bent forward and listened intently for any sound, but nothing but the whistling of the storm reached his ears. And yet he thought he caught a curious sound.

Again he listened, and the sound came more like the faint cry of a hungry child than anything else. Surely it could not be that in the midst of that awful storm—— And yet there it was again.

In a moment he had dismounted and was cautiously moving over the snow until he came to a sort of half-covered hillock, as he thought, and, to his horror, a woman lay there.

Quite dead, he knew that in an instant, but on her breast lay a little child whose cry had attracted his attention.

Arnold took the little thing in his arms and it nestled into them against the warmth, and a lump came into his throat. "Poor little mite," he ejaculated, "what a fate for you, but keep you we will," and he mounted his horse and rode towards the village as quickly as his tired beast would take him, but not before he had taken what papers he could find from the poor creature who had lost her life.

The surprise of the troopers was great, but to Arnold's delight they took the baby as a good omen, especially when they found its father had been in the regiment and had been killed a few days before. Nor would they part from the child, though Arnold urged it on them. The brave fellows had got that baby and they meant to keep her, and they did, and whatever happened during that retreat, however short the men were, the 40th Dragoon baby never suffered. She lived and thrived with their rough care, and the dragoons lived to be proud of their regimental baby.

Five or six grizzled troopers offered to adopt the regimental baby altogether, but such an idea was completely squashed by the rest. They would all adopt the baby and all pay for her keep. When they reached home again, she was placed under the care of a sergeant's wife, and everybody had a hand in her education and in her training. When she learned to sew, she hemmed gay pocket-handkerchiefs for the troopers or knitted warm cuffs for the elder men who complained of rheumatism. But the thing the baby loved above all was to sit at the bedside of any trooper who was ill, and the sick man would declare that the nastiest medicine tasted less nasty if the hand of the baby held it to his lips.

And by and by they saw that the child was a born nurse and would give her life to it, and the men were glad.

There was much danger of the little girl being spoilt as she grew up, but the sergeant's wife was wise, and the child herself was gentle and loving and obedient, as a soldier's child should be.

It was a sad day among the 40th Dragoons when Baby, as they still called her, went away to the great Hospital to get her training. There were many who would have won her love if they

could, but she only smiled quietly and said that all her heart was given to her work, and that she would soon be back among them all.

Arnold Beauchamp was a Colonel of the 40th Dragoons when the regimental Baby came back from her three years' training, and when his wife brought the trim little nurse in her uniform to him, his thoughts flew back to the wild snowy night long ago when a baby's cry had come upon the wind to him.

He took Baby's hand in his and smiled down at her. "What are you going to do now, Baby?" he asked.

"I am going to nurse the 40th Dragoons," she said with an answering smile.

A Tale of Moresby Manor.

TURNING over an old musty folio containing the records of Moresby Manor, the following tale was brought to light, which is not without some interest to those who love a tale of old times.

Moresby Manor is at the present time little else but a pile of ruins, beautiful in decay and still showing signs of the splendour that characterised it over two hundred years ago. The Manor is built upon an eminence, approached on one side by a gentle slope, but on the other, several hundred feet above the ground, forming a natural defence which was hard to overcome while the walls were defended by resolute men. Although only known as Moresby Manor, it was far more like a castle in character, for it was surrounded by thick high walls and always held a large number of men capable of resisting the attacks of enemies.

Sir Evelyn Moresby and his lady were living happily together with their daughter Rosamond at the time when the great Civil War broke out. At once the walls were carefully repaired, and the whole neighbourhood flew to arms, at the worthy knight's instigation, in aid of their King.

Rosamond was walking slowly up and down among the flowers she tended and loved so well, when she was joined by a young Cavalier, evidently on the best of terms with the fair girl.

"Rosamond, wish me joy," he said, "for my guardian hath given his permission at last!"

The girl's dark eyes glanced at him for a second, and then dropped again to the lily she had just plucked. "I do indeed wish you joy," she said gently, "but to-day I dread the future, and it all looks dark before my eyes."

"Why, Rosamond, that is indeed unlike you, my darling. What can be better than to fight for our King and country? You would account me but a coward if I did not wish to go, even if it means losing your sweet company."

"Why, so indeed I should," she said, trying to brighten up; "but I have but one father and

one Arnold, and the King has hundreds of men with no ties to keep them back. Ah, there is my mother waiting for me, I must go."

Arnold watched the girl's light figure run down the path in obedience to her mother's call. It was only six weeks since they had been betrothed, and until now their bliss had seemed perfect. To-morrow they must part, and although he was cheerful before Rosamond, he knew only too well that it was possible that they two might never meet again.

Early next morning the knight and his ward rode away at the head of a band of men, leaving Lady Moresby to guard the Manor as best she could till the King held his own again in peace.

As the days passed by Rosamond busied herself over her tasks and her music as usual. She missed Arnold fearfully, and her only consolation was the working of a banner for the cause. In a few weeks it was ready, and was dispatched to the knight, while the packet contained a letter written by the girl for Arnold, which, after being carefully read, was placed near the young man's heart for safety.

For many weeks no news was received at the Manor. Lady Moresby secretly mourned over the fact. Then came a bundle of delayed letters, over which she and Rosamond rejoiced.

Then again silence!

Rosamond Moresby stood at the entrance hall one evening as the sun was setting, watching, as she had watched many times before, for the two figures that were missing from the happy home circle of Moresby Manor. News had come, not indeed from the knight or Arnold, but ill-tidings that the King had been defeated.

As Rosamond turned away sick at heart from the door, her eye caught a glimpse of a flutter of white in a tree that Arnold only had been able to scale. Instantly her attention was arrested. What could the white be? As she gazed she realised that it was a handkerchief, and evidently intended as a signal. The tree was one of those growing on the steep side of the Manor, and there was one spot in the garden from which she could see and hear without much danger of detection.

Hastily taking a small basket, as if to gather some flowers, away she tripped to the spot to find a stone with a letter attached lying at her feet. In a few lines Arnold told her what he wanted. In the neighbouring copse lay her father sorely wounded, and he must at all costs be brought into the Manor that night. Arnold knew, as did Rosamond, that he could be securely hidden in a tiny room secreted behind the big kitchen chimney, if once he could be moved there without detection, and this he asked the girl to arrange.

The Roundheads were hard upon their track, and the note warned her there was not an instant to spare. Rosamond flew to Lady Moresby, and in a few moments they arranged a plan. Lady Moresby was to start at once on a journey, taking several of the most trusted retainers with her, giving out that her husband was wounded and that she must go to his aid, as indeed she was then doing. Rosamond was to take charge of the Manor, and let her father and lover in, the moment it was dark, at the postern gate, and they hoped in this way to put their foes off the track.

All this was soon acted upon, and Lady Moresby started off, knowing that in a few hours she would be met by the Roundheads and brought back to the Manor, while they would probably never imagine her husband was near the neighbourhood at all, far less think he was in the Manor itself!

All worked well. Lady Moresby started when it was almost dusk, and her daughter watched her out of sight. Then turning to the old man-at-arms she requested him to fetch the keys from the house, that she might see all was well herself.

In his absence, Arnold half carried the wounded knight into the courtyard, where in the gathering darkness they remained unseen.

"That was well done," said Arnold, as he placed the knight once more in the place of security, which, though fearfully small, was still able to take a low couch. "I must go, Rosamond, or my presence may reveal all."

"How did you save him?" whispered the girl.

"Do you remember my practising firing at birds, as I rode up and down the avenue? The skill I acquired then enabled me to disable our pursuers' horses, if they came too close, but not before your father was badly wounded in the shoulder. However, with our good chargers we out-distanced them, and left no traces behind us. But what is that?"

There was a clamour at the gate, and both recognised that the troopers were there.

In a moment Arnold had swung himself over the window-sill, and had vanished into the air. Rosamond, her heart beating wildly, but outwardly calm, waited until the old retainer came in with a white, scared face.

"Mistress Rosamond, they have taken the lady! Shall I let them in, or shall we try to defend the place?"

"That were little use," replied the girl; "open to them at once."

The Roundheads filed into the courtyard, bringing with them Lady Moresby, who at once retired to her room, while Rosamond did the honours of the house to the commander, who had not the slightest idea that his prey lay within a few yards of him, while the younger Cavalier was fleeing for his life over the moors.

It was some time before Rosamond and Arnold met again, and when they did it was in a foreign land, and before that happy day was over they were man and wife.

At the Restoration they returned to Moresby Castle with the knight and his lady, and Rosamond's boys were never tired of hearing from their mother's lips the tale of their grandfather's narrow escape.

Across the Viaduct.

By W. Lloyd Summers, B.A.

"THIS is a beastly old hill; I'm about winded. Let's have an 'easy' at the bridge, and wait for the express, if it hasn't gone by yet."

"Right O! I was feeling the grind a bit myself—it's the lemonade at Parley's, I expect—and we've heaps of time."

We had cycled to the river, and were now on our homeward run, toiling up the steep hill that ultimately brings you into Pensleigh. After our ride and a two hours' row on the river, we were both feeling that we had fairly earned a few minutes' rest.

Harry steered across the roadway and ran his machine alongside the bridge in order to watch for the coming express.

"I must oil up," I remarked, as I dismounted. "My bike runs awfully stiffly."

"It generally does, Fred, on the return journey, just as you always notice that the wind chops round."

I was about to fling my oil-can at his head for this sarcasm, but he saved himself by excitedly exclaiming—

"Great Scot! What on earth is that fellow up to?"

I looked over the coping of the bridge.

Down on the line, about fifty yards away, a man was bending over the metals as though examining the sleepers. The furtive glances which he repeatedly cast about him had raised

Harry's suspicions, otherwise we might have supposed that he was one of the permanent-way men doing some necessary repairs.

As there had lately been so many cases of train-wrecking mentioned in the papers, Harry's fertile brain at once jumped to the conclusion that the man below was preparing a similar outrage.

"We'll soon see what he's up to," I said, and gave a loud halloo.

Looking up, and seeing us watching him from the bridge, the man sprang precipitately up the embankment and disappeared into the thick wood at the top.

Harry's guess was right. No man would have fled from two school-boys if his conscience had been easy.

"Let's get down and see what he's been up to," I proposed.

Leaving our machines on the bridge, we scrambled down to the line, and soon reached the spot where the man had been at work.

The mischief was plain enough. A thick iron bar had been bolted to the metals in order to throw the next train off the line.

"I shouldn't think that this would do much damage," I said, kicking contemptuously at the obstacle.

But, to our surprise, the whole length of metal swung off and lay across the way. On looking a little more closely we found that the scoundrel had loosened the rivets, and knocked out wedges, so that the first train that passed by would tear up the metals, with a probable result awful to contemplate.

TO OUR SURPRISE THE WHOLE LENGTH OF METAL SWUNG OFF AND LAY ACROSS THE WAY.

What was to be done?

"It's the up line," said Harry, pulling out his watch. "The express is due at the junction at 4.5, and I should think it would reach here about the hour."

He stood for a moment silent, whilst I waited for his decision, knowing that he would make the necessary calculation in a quarter of the time that I should take.

"That'll be our best chance!" he declared, hurrying away in the direction of the bridge. "Come along, Fred! we must get our machines and ride along the line to the viaduct. On the farther side is a signal-box—old 'Carrots',' you know—and, if we can only get there before the express passes, we can stop her in time."

In our hurry we nearly smashed our bicycles getting them down the steep embankment. But once we were down our path was fairly easy. A narrow track, trampled down by railway men on their way to and from work, allowed us to "scorch" along at our very best pace, and the thought of the imminent peril to which the express was exposed took away all recollection of our fatigue.

"UP WITH THE SIGNAL! STOP THE EXPRESS!" I SHOUTED. p. 53.

In a few minutes we came in sight of the viaduct. But here a grave difficulty must beset us. Our bicycles would be of no use in this part of the journey, for the way was so narrow that the sleepers stretched across from side to side, and presented a series of obstacles such as none but a trick-rider could have been expected to surmount.

"We shall have to get off and use our legs," I shouted to Harry, who was following close on my back wheel.

But at the same moment the rolling sound of the express in the distance warned us that we should not have sufficient time to cross the long viaduct before the train had passed the signal-box.

"She's done for," groaned Harry. "She'll be across before we've gone half-way."

"There's only one chance, and that isn't possible," he exclaimed, and this Irishism would have made me laugh if things had not been so desperate.

"To ride along the parapet of the viaduct—but I'm mad even to think of it."

Such an idea would never have entered my head. Original ideas never do enter my brain—as old Dobbs, our mathematical master, is always telling me. But, now that Harry had suggested it, there seemed to be a possible chance of saving the train.

"It's quite three feet wide," he urged, "and we've often ridden one hundred yards and more without going outside a three-foot margin."

That was true, for it was a favourite feat of mine to ride my bicycle in the playground over a narrow path marked by a couple of lines of tape. It was, however, equally true that such a feat performed on *terra firma* was one thing, whilst riding a similar track eighty or ninety feet above a wide river was quite another.

"You won't do it?" Harry entreated.

I do not think my courage would have been equal to the task had it not been for the long shrill whistle which announced the approach of the express to Bardell Station; but the thought of all those passengers unconsciously hastening to their doom nerved me to make the attempt.

Leaving the track along which we had been riding, I drove my bicycle up a slight incline that fortunately led straight to the brick parapet of the viaduct.

This I struck at an angle that seemed sure to land me on the other side; but, although my wheel went perilously near the edge, I found myself in a straight line with the viaduct. Then I pedalled my hardest, knowing that I should "wobble" less the more quickly I rode. As the ground beneath me fell away and deepened, it seemed as though I were climbing a steep incline. The sensation was weird in the extreme, and my nerves were in such a state that I am not sure

THE FRONT WHEEL GRAZED THE EDGE OF THE PARAPET AGAIN AND AGAIN; BUT, AFTER ALMOST GIVING MYSELF UP FOR LOST, I FOUND MYSELF RIDING ONCE MORE IN THE VERY CENTRE OF MY NARROW PATH.—p. 53.

that I should not have hurriedly dismounted had it not been equally or even more safe to ride on. The front wheel grazed the edge of the parapet again and again; but, after almost giving myself up for lost, I found myself riding once more in the very centre of my narrow path.

When I reached the margin of the river I nearly lost my balance, for the stream being rapid my head began to swim as the whole viaduct appeared to be rushing furiously along sidewards. With a great effort I turned my eyes from the swirling waters beneath and fixed them on the further end of the viaduct, where stood the signal-box. At the top of the steps I could see "Carrots" wildly gesticulating at me.

I tried to shout to him, but my mouth was so dry and parched that I could not utter a word. Doubtless he was thinking that this was one of the "larks" with which we had often teased him.

The intervening space appeared to be rapidly decreasing, when a sudden gust of wind met me, and I wobbled until I thought I must go over. But once more I steadied myself, and, with two-thirds of my journey completed, began to hope for success.

There was the near signal to be passed. It was a doubtful question whether the supports would permit me to ride under it. Fortunately, it was a high post, and, if I could steer my wheel well inside, I should probably be able to keep clear of the supports. Before I could quite make up my mind the signal-post appeared to flash by. I felt a sharp pain at the top of my head as the iron support tore off my cap and grazed my scalp. Then, with a great shock, the signal-box seemed to leap forward to meet me; my wheel struck violently against the side of the cabin, and I was falling.

The sensation of falling appeared to me to last a long time, and I wondered stupidly when the shock of meeting the earth would come. My life came before me in rapidly-passing scenes.

Yet, if the signalman and Harry Marsden are to be believed, my drop was simply from the parapet to the line, for with the greatest of good fortune I had fallen on the right side of the parapet, whilst my machine fell on the other.

Before "Carrots" could descend the steps to my help I had sprung up into the cabin.

"Up with the signal! Stop the express!" I shouted, and without a question the man drew over the lever.

An indignant whistle from the express sounded like the sweetest music in my ears, and I ran to the window and watched the train roll swiftly by, with steam shut off and shrieking brakes. It came to a standstill half-way across the viaduct, within a few yards of the place where Harry was waiting.

I heard an exclamation behind me, and, turning, saw the signalman

"WE WAS STOPPED ONLY LAST WEEK WITH A SIMILAR STORY."

in the act of putting down the signal. Mad with fury, I threw myself on him. Was all my perilous task to have been in vain?

"You idiot!" I exclaimed, as I strove in vain to pull over the lever. "Do you want to have the death of all these people on your conscience?"

"You young fool!" was the signalman's equally violent reply. "You'll find you've played this game once too often. You'll neither pull that signal up again, nor will you get back to school until you've been before the magistrates."

While we were struggling, the cabin was filled with people, and I was forcibly pulled away from the infuriated man's grasp.

Fortunately, when the signal fell, Harry was able to warn the driver and his mate of the danger that lay ahead. Grumbling, and only half convinced, the fireman and both guards ran back to the cabin.

"Look here, young gents," said one of the guards, when we had told our tale. "We was stopped only last week with a similar story. A fellow told Dick, here, that the tunnel had fallen in and we had to slow down—only to find it a plant!"

I did not know how we could prove our good faith to these doubters, but Harry's common-sense suggested a way out of the difficulty.

"Did the chap who told you about the tunnel wait to see how you took the sell, or did he ride his bicycle across the parapet of this viaduct—as Fred Winter has—in order to be in time to warn you?"

"That's true, Dick. He didn't wait, so far as I know. Perhaps these gents is right enough."

"Well, of course, you chaps can go on and commit suicide if you like—only it's rather rough on the passengers. Why don't you take us in the van with you? We can point out the very spot, and, if we've been hoaxing you, you can have your revenge before you say good-bye. It's a little hard, when a fellow has risked his life for yours, to assume he's a liar."

It was indeed rough on us. But in a very few minutes a transformation scene took place, and while the line was being repaired I had to tell over and over again the details of my ride across the viaduct.

The scoundrel who had planned such a terrible disaster was caught soon after, and awarded a long spell of imprisonment.

The railway company sent me a brand-new bicycle to replace the one I had so badly damaged in my charge upon the signal-cabin.

Out into the Night.

By F. Eastwood.

In a bedroom furnished with lavish expenditure sat Paulina, the only daughter of the Roman Sergius Pollonius. The room was only lighted by a window looking into the atrium, and that was so shaded by heavy curtains that it would have been almost dark, had it not been illuminated by several bronze and gold lamps hanging from the ceiling, in which the perfumed oil, slowly wasting away, diffused not only light, but a delicious fragrance around the room. Beautifully carved arm-chairs, and tables curiously wrought in wood, metal, and ivory, almost cumbered the chamber, and mirrors of burnished silver, set in the panels of the wall, multiplied many times the scene. Statues in bronze and marble, the work of the greatest artists of the age, looked down from many a niche and pedestal; but perhaps the most beautiful of all the articles of furniture in the room was the bed. It was made of ebony and ivory, inlaid with gold and silver.

But for all this magnificence the Lady Paulina cared very little; not because she had risen above it, but because from its very familiarity it had become a matter of indifference to her. She had not, indeed, any idea of what it was to be without it. All her life she had not known a wish that could not be gratified by a touch of her little silver bell. Her mother had died when she was but an infant, and her foster-mother had been the wife of Marcus the vintner. Her father, as soon as the influence of his wife was removed, had plunged into all kinds of excess, and was only restrained from utter ruin by his ambition for political power. To gratify this darling passion he sometimes sacrificed others almost equally beloved. He could calm his burning hate, smother his rage, turn from the untasted wine-cup, be deaf to the solicitations of his licentious companions, if by so doing he could draw himself one step nearer, either in fancy or reality, to the grand object of his ambition—the imperial purple. Nor did this idea appear entirely without foundation. In his veins flowed the blood of the Cæsars, only mingled with that of families older and equally distinguished. His wealth, until he squandered it in his schemes, was immense, his eloquence considerable. He did not, it is true, possess the love of the people, but he gained, what is to many men as useful, their hearty dread. Until within the last few months Fortune had seemed to favour him, not a single scheme had miscarried, not a single venture but had been crowned with abundant success; but now the fickle goddess seemed determined to prove her right to her ascribed character, and be as much his enemy as she had formerly been his friend. She played him false at the gambling-table, in the senate-chamber, in the emperor's court. He began to hear murmurs of discontent where before had been only silent, cringing submission; and last of all, his lawsuit, involving not only vast sums of money, but also his personal honour, had been decided in favour of a younger aspirant for public favour.

But in all this darkness there was one gleam of light. A Gallic prince, possessing immense tracts of territory, and exercising great influence over the affairs of those northern nations which

were even then becoming formidable to Rome, had been fascinated by the sweet face of the Lady Paulina, and offered to unite with him in his schemes against the Christians, whom he imagined to be the cause of his dangerous position, if he would give him his daughter in marriage. He was inspirited by this proffered assistance, for he might in this way, not only gratify his ambition, but also his malice, his revenge, and his cruelty. He laid his plans with the greatest caution. All the powers of his naturally fine mind were invoked to plot and counterplot; and now he had just left the emperor's private audience-chamber, after witnessing the signing of an edict which, if properly enforced, as he meant it should be, would wipe out the name of Christian from the annals of Rome.

Such was the parent to whom this timid, shrinking girl must confess that she had cast in her lot with the despised and hated sect. No wonder she sank down by the side of her bed, and buried her face in its drapery.

"Strength, O Lord! strength!" was the cry of that weak, trembling spirit, sinking at the very thought of the magnitude of the trial which awaited her. Well for her that she knew where to appeal for protection in this her hour; well for her that supernatural strength was at hand. Prayer calmed her, soothed her, so gently that she could hardly tell how it was accomplished; the Comforter came to her, and in the arms of His love she sank like a wearied, frightened child. Gradually her sobs grew fainter and ceased, her quivering nerves relaxed, and her face, sweet and sad, but peaceful, resting on her clasped hands—she slept.

The twilight was deepening in the shaded chamber when she awoke, recalled to the present by her maid Tullia, who informed her that her father commanded her presence that evening at the arena for supper, which was even then being served. She arose bewildered and dizzy; she could only remember that something very dreadful was about to happen, without being able to comprehend what it was. Slowly it all dawned upon her, and opening wide her frightened eyes, she made an involuntary movement as if about to run from the threatened danger, before she realised the uselessness of such an attempt. Then, with instinctive wisdom, she gave herself no further time for thought, but only staying to dip her hand in an alabaster vase of perfumed water, which a Parian nymph held out for her refreshment, and press it for a moment over her brow and eyes, she passed out into the atrium.

It was the hour for the principal meal of the day, on which the Roman cook bestowed all his skill. It was not often that Paulina was called upon to partake of this with her father, as he was generally accompanied by his political friends, who were neither fit nor agreeable companions for a modest maiden; and she well knew that this summons betokened he was alone, and had some important communication to make. At any other time her girlish curiosity would have been aroused, but now her mind was so preoccupied by the disclosure she had to make that she scarcely gave the subject a thought, but followed the slave sent to conduct her to the dining-hall.

For some time the meal progressed in silence, the father seemed in no mood for conversation, the daughter, although the important declaration rose many times to her lips, could not compose her trembling voice to utter it. The well-trained slaves glided noiselessly about their respective tasks, the rare and costly viands in gold and silver dishes were brought in and removed, most of them untasted, with the wines proper for each, and of these alone the master of the house had partaken freely. His movements became very abrupt and restless; more than once the stately Nubian, who stood at the back of the couch on which he reclined, was obliged to pick up and replace the cushion which supported his left elbow. At length, when the fruit alone remained on the table, and all the servants had, at their master's signal, left the room, the Roman noble spoke: "Paulina, the great Gallic chief, Orthorix, is high in favour with the emperor."

There was no answer, only a look of surprise in the brown eyes; so he took another draught of the fiery Falernian wine, and then continued—

"He will sup with me to-morrow night, and it is my will that you be present and receive him. Wear the jewels that I bought of the Jew Solomon in Egypt."

The maiden still gazed in her father's face in mute interrogation, all this seemed so strangely irrelevant to the thoughts then occupying her mind. Pollonius' brow grew dark at the sight of her innocent face, still darker at the reply which came at length—

"Is he a good man, father?"

The noble took another draught from his golden cup, vexed at the question put in such a point-blank manner. *Good* he knew very well he was not, but moral character was an aspect under which he had not thought of viewing his future son-in-law.

"Good or not, what matters it?" he said at length. "He has asked you of me in marriage."

The colour rushed painfully into the young girl's face and neck, and her hand trembled as she caught hold of the arm of the couch to steady herself. She saw that her father had decided her future for her; she did not think of such a thing as turning him from his purpose. It was not the custom for maidens to have any voice in this most momentous decision; they were seldom allowed to become acquainted with those who were to be their companions through life, until the deed was consummated and their husbands lifted them over the thresholds into their future homes. So Paulina was not as much astonished at this abrupt declaration as a maiden of modern times would be; the great question with her was how this change would affect her Christian life; and hardly knowing what she did, she put the thought that was uppermost in her mind into words.

"My father, is he a Christian?"

The astonished Roman put down the goblet he had just raised to his lips, his face reddening with surprise and wrath—wrath at the associations connected with the hated name, surprise at the strangeness of the question.

"By Jove and all the gods!" he exclaimed, starting up from his couch, "were he ten, aye, a hundred times as rich as he is, if he were a Christian dog he should have no daughter of mine. No, he serves the gods of his ancestors, and knows nothing of all this foolery. But where did you learn anything of this upstart deceiver?" And here followed a string of oaths and imprecations fearful for any one to hear, terrible indeed for the shuddering, trembling child before him; but in the midst she sprung to her feet. The most timid animal will dare resist when those it loves most are assailed, and the sound of those horrid words applied to Him who was so very dear to her made her forget all fear.

"Father! father! you must not speak so. He is so good and kind and holy! He is my God! I love Him; I am a Christian!"

"MY FATHER, IS HE A CHRISTIAN?"

It was strange to see the change that came over the bloated, sensual face of the haughty Roman. Passions so various, so violent, so conflicting, swept over it in such rapid succession that its convulsive movements more resembled those of a demon, thwarted and brought to bay, than of a human being. But it was over in a moment, only leaving a look of bitter defiance and hatred on his pale lips and darkened brow; but he trembled from head to foot, trembled as his daughter did not, though she stood before him with all the weight of his fierce wrath upon her. In the moment of her trial came the needed strength. She heard, as if they came from very far away, the curses that her father poured out upon her; she hardly felt his rough grasp when at last, moved beyond all endurance by the passive silence of the girl before him, he dragged her to her own apartment and thrust her in.

Then, after awhile, she came slowly back to the present; her supernatural strength was gone, and she was once more the timid, shrinking girl, shuddering at the past and cowering before the future. She remembered now her father's terrible sentence, from which she felt no human power could induce him to retract; one week of solitary confinement, in which to decide whether she would abjure Christ and sacrifice to the gods, or be turned from the door, a homeless outcast, to brave as she might the fury of the emperor's new edict.

It was pitiful to see her as she stood there, her hair thrown back from her forehead, her pale lips quivering, her hands clasping each other convulsively, her eyes, dilated and tearless, with their peculiar, hunted expression, wandering from side to side, as if in search of some friend, some comfort, some hope in this dark, dark hour. But there was none to see, none to hear the low moan of anguish with which she threw herself down on her bed; no one to press a gentle, cooling hand upon those throbbing temples; no one to whom she could cling and tell all those nervous terrors which her state of excitement made particularly hard to bear, but which would have vanished before a word of kindly sympathy. Human aid there was none, but the Good Shepherd had not forgotten His feeble lamb. "As one whom his mother comforteth," so comforted He the desolate child; and when Pollonius, after drowning whatever remorse he may have felt in the wine-cup, was led, cursing and shouting, to his room by his slaves, she was sleeping with such a happy smile on her face as even her most joyous moments seldom brought there.

How she passed those weary seven days that succeeded this night, she never could exactly tell. Sometimes she played with her birds, or watched the gold fish in the fountain, clapping her hands with childish glee as she watched their sports, forgetting for a few moments her own troubles; but then, again, they would come upon her in their full weight, and sometimes a faint hope would cross her mind that her father would not execute his fearful threat, that he only meant to frighten and punish her, and then he would forgive her; and perhaps, if he gave her to Orthorix, the Gaul might be kind to her far away in her northern home. Then the thought would come that all her friends had forsaken her, and she would go and sit down by the barred door, and listen for hours to the occasional footsteps in the atrium, hoping each one might be her friend Marcella's. She did not know that the fearless maiden had twice braved her father's wrath in her behalf. She took little note of time; it seemed months to her before the eighth day arrived, and the grave steward came to lead her to her father's presence. He found her sunk in a state of deep apathy, but she started and shivered at the sound of his voice breaking on her long silence, and followed him without a word, walking feebly, and tottering so that more than once she grasped at the marble columns in the atrium to save herself from falling.

Sergius Pollonius looked up as his daughter entered, and was for one moment shocked at the effect of his cruel punishment; but in another wrath overpowered remorse, for he saw that his plan had failed. He saw in those dimmed, sunken eyes, patient endurance, but no submission; in the pale cheeks suffering, but no yielding. Disappointed and baffled, hatred and cruelty smothered in his breast any faint feelings that might have been left there of parental love and tenderness. Still he spoke calmly.

"Paulina, you have had time to think, to decide. What have you to say?"

"Father, I cannot deny Him. Forgive me, have mercy! I will obey you in everything else, but how can I deny my Saviour?"

"Hark you, girl," cried the Roman, his tone rising as his smothered wrath burst forth, "my word is passed; it shall be as I said; one word, and you leave my roof for ever. Choose now between your God and your home, aye, and your life. Choose now and for ever!" he thundered when she did not answer at once.

She crossed her hands meekly upon her throbbing bosom, and uttered one word, "Christ."

There was a heavy hand on her shoulder, the door was flung back, and out among the crowd of frightened, staring slaves in the entrance porch, the father drew his child. "Open the gate!" he thundered. The great bronze doors were open in a moment, and the night, in all the blackness of a gathering storm, was before them. Already a few rain-drops dashed in their faces.

The girl saw the terror before her and shrank. She turned and clung to that cruel, pitiless arm.

"O father! not out in the storm, not alone in the night!"

The lines in the hard, brutal face did not soften for an instant. The great bronze doors clanged again, and with one cry of terror the trembling girl fled, homeless, friendless, from her father's door, out into the darkness and the storm of a cruel world.

A fortnight later a deep gloom hung over the palace of Sergius Pollonius in the Via Sacra. Not only in the deserted boudoir where the Cupids and Graces on the walls smiled uselessly at each other, not only in the lonely chamber where the Psyche, with her extinguished lamp, gazed down as if in wonder on the unused bed, even in the atrium, bright as it was with sunlight, the very drops from the fountain plashed mournfully on the shoulders of the water-nymphs, and the vines upon the pillars drooped. And gloomiest of all sounded the footsteps of the master of the mansion pacing up and down, as they had done the greater part of the night. Firm, hard, cruel they sounded, as the iron-heeled sandal ground on the delicate marble. Thwarted where he least expected opposition, a foe arisen at his very hearthstone, baffled in his search for Marcella, who, he rightly believed, had not only led his daughter into the company of this degraded sect, but also given her shelter when he had driven her from his doors, his savage temper was now wrought up to a pitch of fury. His features were swollen with passion, his eyes bloodshot and glaring, his whole look that of a tiger who, having once tasted blood, can find no rest until he may renew his horrible banquet. His slaves feared to approach him, they obeyed what orders he gave promptly, for he was in no mood to be further angered; but they only addressed him to bring to him from time to time the messages which arrived from the officers of the law, stating that although a few Christians had been captured, many of them, and among them those whom he most sought, had taken refuge in the catacombs, whence it would be impossible to unearth them.

The clepsydra in the fountain, as well as the sun-dial over the door, indicated near noon, when the brazen door leading from the atrium to the entrance porch was thrown open and a visitor entered.

Sergius Pollonius had just reached the upper end of the hall in his walk, and turned so as to face the intruder, and so astonished was he at the sight that he stopped short. It was a child whose sallow cheeks were burning with excitement. She pushed back the hair that shaded her forehead, and her black eyes seemed fairly to flash with determination. She did not pause a moment to look at what must have been a novel sight to her, she apparently had no room in her preoccupied mind for either curiosity or fear, for she ran directly to the Roman noble, and caught him by the robe.

"Sergius Pollonius, gather your men together and come with me quickly!"

The master of the house was for a moment confounded at this strange address, but recovering

himself, said sarcastically: "And who are you whom I am to have the honour of following?" Then without waiting for an answer he thundered out to his slave, "Here, Zenos, turn this beggar brat from my doors!"

The child turned pale, and stamped her foot on the ground with rage at finding herself mocked.

"Very well," she said, "mock, if you choose, the only person who can tell you where to find what you are seeking!"

Pollonius, in his varied intercourse with the world, had learned that it is not safe to despise even an apparently contemptible coadjutor, and that assistance, as well as opposition, is often found in the quarter where we least expect it; so he stepped forward and grasped the child by the arm.

"If you are trifling with me, girl, it will be the worse for you. Who sent you to me?"

"No one; I would go by myself as I came by myself, if I did not want you more than you seem to want me."

"Well, what do you want?"

The Roman's tone had changed; it was still gruff and moody, but no longer disdainful. He had found that his strange visitor was too proud to care for his pride, or to fear his anger.

"I want revenge!" said the strange creature, drawing up her deformed figure to its greatest height; "I want revenge, and you can help me to it. I've got them all safe there; there is enough to feed the lions for a month! There are two passages closed up, and you must bring soldiers enough to take them all."

"Whom do you mean?"

The child made a gesture of impatience.

"Those that you and I both hate—the Christians, the Nazarenes; they are all together at their worship, bishop and people, and a new convert with them; you can take them in the very act of breaking the edict."

"A new convert, say you?" said Pollonius, his brow darkening. "Was it a fair maiden, was it——?" He paused, he was not quite ready to proclaim his disgrace to the world.

"I know not if it were a lady or no," replied the girl carelessly. "She is fair enough, but the lions will not have *her*, *she* will recant easily enough; but there is Marcella, the vintner's daughter, she does more to spread it than all the rest put together. But if you do not haste they will be gone; they burrow like rats, in those catacombs."

Pollonius needed no urging now. Revenge stood ready for him. He already saw in imagination that noble girl, whose purity had so often shamed his foulness, who had blessed where he had cursed, and protected where he had outraged, trembling in his power. It took him but a short time to obtain a band of soldiers, who, led by the child, effectually barred every avenue of escape. His victims were already as safe as if immured in the dungeons of the Mamertine prison.

When the worshippers arose from their knees, and first became aware of the danger, or rather hopelessness of their situation, they expressed little astonishment, less fear; only husbands and wives gazed mutely in each others' faces, and parents gathered their children in their arms, and the younger men collected around the bishop, who had arisen and stood calmly facing his foes. Paulina gave a cry of terror and clung to her friend's waist. As for Marcella herself, there was a bright look in her eyes, and a rising colour on her cheek, as she gathered her robe firmly in her right hand. Her whole attitude was that of one who has been waiting to be called, and now hears the summons. But amid all this heroism, there was infinite tenderness in the way in which she passed her left arm around the trembling girl and upheld her. It was something far different from stoicism which sustained those helpless women and men in that most trying

THEY ALLOWED HER TO WANDER IN THE DESERTED GARDEN.—p. 64.

moment. There was neither indifference nor anger in those calm faces, and the submission with which they yielded as they were bound by couples to a long rope, had in it none of that recklessness and disregard of life which some think necessary to martyrdom.

Never perhaps had life appeared sweeter to many of them than it did that sweet summer morning as they emerged from the musty vaults of the catacombs into the fresh air and glorious Italian sunshine. The Campagna, with its gardens and villas, lay around them, the labourers, stretched beneath the trees, were taking their noontide rest; there were birds singing among the branches, and, sweeter than the birds, the voices of some children sounded from behind a garden wall. Everything suggested life, calm, happy, everyday life, nothing tyranny and cruelty, agony and despair, torture and death, save those two bands of unresisting captives. There were about forty of them in all, men, women, and children, divided into two companies, and closely guarded by the soldiers. Paulina was not among them. When the Christians had been first seized, her father had put her in charge of certain of his own servants, and sent her to one of his summer residences on the upper part of the Tiber.

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Fire and sword, torture and imprisonment, the waves of the Tiber as well as the lions in the Colosseum, had done their appointed work.

Marcella's life was over, but the maiden had left a message for her cousin Philip inscribed on her tablets, which were safely delivered to him after her death in the Colosseum.

"To the hands of the noble Greek, Philip of Ephesus, these, speedily—

"Thou art free. For thee the crown, and the palm, and the rest are not now, but they shall be hereafter. For this I give thanks to our Lord and Saviour that He hath not left His cause without witnesses on the earth. Philip! thou art baptized in blood; be strong and of good courage. The prison doors have been opened for thee and closed upon me, because thy work is not accomplished and mine is. Go on, then, in that strength which, as thou seest, can overcome all things, even death. Seek out, if thou canst, Paulina, the daughter of Paulinus. On the day of our arrest she was conveyed away by her father; whither I know not, but doubtless to trials which will shake her faith to its foundation. She is feeble, and ever needeth a strong and loving heart to keep her aright. Give unto her my greeting, and bid her never lose her grasp on eternal life. Though it seemeth night now, there cometh a morning, and I cannot fear. Farewell until the morning."

Many months passed away, and Philip had not forgotten the legacy left him by Marcella—the care of the Lady Paulina, and had endeavoured many times to discover what had become of her, but in vain. The palace in the Via Sacra was closed, and Pollonius was reported to be staying at one of his villas near Capua; but Philip, after many dangerous, as well as wearisome investigations, discovered that his daughter did not form part of his household. Meanwhile he went on quietly with his daily labour, until the short winter had passed, and the Campagna was beautiful with spring flowers; then one afternoon he took a boat and went up the river to receive some bundles of osiers which he needed for his work. It was a perfect day, and there was no need of haste, so, on returning, he drew in his oars, and suffered the boat to float down with the tide, while he drank in the loveliness of the scene, and wondered what must be the glories of that heaven which lay in store for him, if its beauties far exceeded all that ear ever heard, or eye beheld, or imagination conceived. He was roused from his reverie by a little cry of wonder and delight—

"Oh! Philip, Philip! is it you?"

He started and seized his oars, looking on all sides for the voice, but at first he could not see whence it had proceeded. His boat had floated, drawn by an eddy, so close to the shore, that it was entangled by the reeds, and it needed all his exertions, for a moment, to prevent it from grounding in the mud; but, as by a vigorous push he shoved it off, he saw that just above him was

a little summer-house, or covered seat, projecting from a wall that evidently surrounded a villa of some extent, though of dilapidated appearance, and from it looked down upon him a pale, eager face, that he had never expected to see in this world again. It took him but a few moments to land, a friendly tree and some vines aided his ascent, and in a few moments more he was standing by the Lady Paulina's side.

She could not speak to him for some moments, but only sobbed out her gladness that some one had found her at last, while Philip could only look at her, and wonder at the change that sorrow and suspense had wrought in the sweet, childish face, that he had last seen nestling in Marcella's bosom. All the sweetness was there still, but there was such a look of settled suffering in the dimmed, brown eyes, the pallid cheeks, and the quivering lips, that he trembled at the thought of what those months of agony must have been.

"Tell me all about Marcella," she said, at last; "don't be afraid to tell me all; I know that she is dead."

The young Greek told all about those fearful days, and wondered that the delicate girl at his side did not seem to shrink from their horrors; he did not know that life had become so bitter to her, that even a death among the lions in the Colosseum seemed preferable to it. Then she told her tale.

On the day when the Christians were surprised at their worship in the underground chapel, she had felt herself seized by two men, wrapped in a cloak, and borne rapidly away in another direction from that taken by the rest of the captives. She heard her father's voice giving some directions, in which she could only distinguish the "Tiber," and she believed she was to be thrown into the river. She lost consciousness then, and only recovered it to find herself in a strange room, barely furnished, and having only a window, high up in the wall, opening into an inner court. This room, and another opening from it, she had never left until a few days before, and all that time she had been waited on by an old woman and a rough-looking man whom she had never before seen, and who turned a deaf ear to her pleadings for news of her friends. She had seen her father twice, and he had assured her that every Christian in Rome was slain. After each of these visits she believed there had been an attempt made to murder her, but some little circumstance, ordered by a watchful Providence, had interfered to thwart their plans. Once she had been very ill, she believed from the effect of something they had mixed with her food, she did not know how long, but after that the old woman had been a little kinder to her, and now allowed her to wander in the deserted garden a part of every day. The strain upon her nerves while thus daily expecting a violent death must have been dreadful, especially when added to the depressing effects of loneliness; nothing but Christian principle could have borne up against it.

"I told it all to Jesus," she said, "when I was so lonely, and thought every one that loved me was dead, and only those that hated me were alive; and when I was so thirsty and did not dare to drink, He used to come and comfort me. Sometimes I thought I saw Him moving in the room, and then it was all light, and He would say, 'Peace be unto you.' Then I would fall asleep and dream of Marcella walking among the angels; and when I called her she would come out from their company, and put her cool hand on my brow, and kiss me, just as she used to do; but when I asked her to let me come there too among the happy angels, she would always say, 'Not yet, not yet!' so I knew I was not to die yet, and Christ would give me strength not to be so frightened. Sometimes, when I remembered my father's words, I thought that perhaps God did not care any more for Rome now there were no Christians in it; but at other times it seemed as if perhaps Jesus might love me all the more, and watch me all the closer, if there were no others to guard from danger and save in temptation. Only it seemed as if death would be so sweet if there were only some one to hold my hand when I was going. This evening it seemed as if those crimson and golden glories were only curtains that hid Marcella from me, and I

stretched out my hand toward them; and then, through a little rift in the clouds, just where the evening star always came first, she seemed to look down on me with her beautiful eyes full of love and joy and hope, and pointed down to the earth, and then I saw you."

"She sent me to you," said Philip, with tears in his eyes; "she bade me seek you, and give you her greeting, and charged me to watch over you, and give you a helping hand, that you might never lose your hold on the eternal life she is enjoying."

"Did she?" said the girl, laying both her hands in those Philip held out to her, and lifting her face in childlike simplicity and confidence. "Oh, I am so thankful! I am so weak; so very, very weak. I was so afraid that I might yield in some moment when they pressed me so hard; but now, if you will only comfort me a little, and tell me things to strengthen me, and if I can only think you are praying for me that my faith fail not when the doubt and fear come, then I shall be able to stand firm; but oh, it was so horrible to feel so all alone!"

"It must have been very horrible," said Philip, gathering the two little hands in one of his, and putting the disengaged arm around the trembling waist.

"I suppose I ought not to have felt so. Marcella used to say that Jesus would never forsake me, and I know now He never does. I suppose it was weakness in me, but I did so want to talk to some one who was just like myself, and would tell me what other people were doing; and now you have come! But you are so wise—Marcella said you were—and you will think I am a very weak, foolish child, but please be kind to me, there is no one left to love me now; but please help me a little, for her sake!"

Philip gazed down into the sweet face raised so pitifully toward his, and his heart was swelling with so many thoughts that none could shape themselves into words; only he felt that the charge Marcella had laid upon him would be no heavy burden to bear through life.

As the little boat shot down the river in the starlight, impelled by far more vigorous strokes than those which it had felt in ascending the stream, Philip felt his heart strangely lightened. Life seemed opening to him, hope and fancy revived. There was one in the world for whose happiness he might live, for whom he might labour with heart and hand. Already he was laying a thousand plans.

The following evening saw the little boat again ascending the Tiber, but this time with two occupants, for Philip felt that he should not encounter single-handed the difficulties which he might have to overcome in placing the Lady Paulina in the retreat prepared for her in the catacombs, and he trusted much to the ready wit of Mutius, his fellow-worker, and his knowledge of the ground, as well as to his strong arm.

Their ostensible errand was to procure reeds, and they did, indeed, so load their boat with

"OH! PHILIP, PHILIP! IS IT YOU?"—p. 63.

them that it appeared like a floating bower, and when it was drawn up among the tall grass beneath the summer-house, no one at a little distance would have been able to distinguish it from the waving, swaying green by which it was surrounded. Mutius was left in charge of it while Philip climbed the bank, for he had yet to persuade the timid girl to trust herself in their hands, and expose herself to those dangers which would be the consequence of attempting to escape from the power of one at once so powerful and malignant.

She was tremblingly glad to see Philip, and he thought he could already perceive the change for the better which returning hope and an assurance of sympathy had made on the wan face. She said that she had been undisturbed since he had been there before, but that the old woman had looked suspiciously at her, and that the man who had charge of her had gruffly remonstrated against the permission given her to walk in the garden, and she was afraid she was watched, or that perhaps they were going to take her away to some other place, and if they did, what should she do? She had thought she could bear it all, now that she knew there was some one to come for her, yet this made it seem harder than ever not to see him again. That evening when she had first come to the summer-house, and looked up and down the river without seeing him, she had thought that perhaps the interview of the night before was only a bright, happy dream, such as had often tantalised her in her feverish nights, but which was only a dream after all.

"It was true," said Philip gently, "and I have come to prove it to you. Lady Paulina, will you trust me?"

The girl looked up wonderingly into his eyes, but she seemed to be satisfied with what she saw there, for she laid her hand in his arm, and said, simply: "Marcella said so, and I will. I will do what you think best."

"Then," said Philip, "I will tell you frankly that I think you are in great danger here, and that we, your friends, think you must immediately leave this place and go to one that has been prepared for you, where you will at least be safe for a time."

She started. To her timid spirit, and nerves unstrung by mental and bodily suffering, every change seemed fraught with fear; but, before she could speak, they both turned pale with alarm. There were heavy footfalls on the garden path, and a rough voice which the poor girl knew only too well, and she clung, gasping, to her companion for protection. Not a moment was to be lost. He made a low call, such as the wild birds often make in winging their way over the Campagna, and, in a moment, Mutius' head appeared above the bushes, as he balanced himself in the boat. Meanwhile the footsteps were drawing nearer, and Philip saw that Paulina was, with difficulty, repressing a scream, so he put his hand upon her lips, and whispered: "Be very quiet; you said you would trust me; do not make a sound, whatever happens;" and then, gathering her in one arm, he swung himself down the bank—how, he could never tell—and clung with one hand to a tree, until he felt her safe in the grasp of Mutius. The latter, who had turned over the reeds and laid the almost unconscious girl in the bottom of the boat, piled them again over, and scarcely had Philip sprung to his place, before a vigorous push of the oars sent the boat out into the middle of the stream. Nor were they a moment too soon, for already two dark forms appeared in the little summer-house, and a curse and shout rang out over the water—

"What boat is that?"

The two young men bent all their energies to their task, and the oars bent under their sturdy strokes. But the boat was small and over-burdened, and, ere they had passed a mile on their way, they felt sure they were pursued. In the perfect stillness of the night they could hear the measured beat of oars in the water, and once, just as they were rounding a bend in the river, they perceived the waving of torches scarcely half-a-mile behind them. Philip gave up all for lost, and would have thrown down his oars in despair, had not Mutius whispered to him that there was one more chance to be tried, and, turning the boat toward the left bank, at the

same moment tossing overboard the whole cargo of reeds, he left them to float down the river on the rapid tide. The boat, meanwhile, had entered a broad ditch or meadow-drain, whose mouth was so overhung with bushes and vines that it would hardly be noticed in the day-time—much less would it be likely to attract attention at night. The moon, too, was past its full, and only just rising. The ditch ran for some distance in a direction parallel with the river, so that in a little while they were side by side with their pursuers, only a fringe of low bushes between. They rested on their oars, and hardly dared to breathe, as the glare of the torches flashed through the leafy screen, and hoarse voices were heard calling to each other.

Philip felt Paulina's trembling clasp upon him, and heard her quick, sobbing breath; but, in trustful obedience, she had not uttered a word. When the boat had passed, he raised her from her cramped position, and said, in a tremulous voice—

"Thank God! we are safe now!"

"Hardly," whispered Mutius: "they will soon overtake the floating reeds, and finding what they are will return to seek us; we must be away from here as soon as possible. There is no use in attempting to enter the city, for they will, no doubt, have warned the guards at all the river gates."

"But the retreat," said Philip; "that is within the walls."

"There are other ways of entering the catacombs besides those you have seen," was the reply. "There used to be one near here, and, if it is still practicable, we will soon reach it. We will land here."

They did so, plunging for some distance through the mud and wet grass, Philip carrying Paulina, while Mutius, after giving the little boat a push that sent it floating slowly down the ditch, lest it might betray the secret of their landing-place, went in front to pick out the firmest spots for them to tread upon. They soon reached higher ground. The moon shone out brightly and the night breeze, which had sprung up, was very refreshing to their fevered frames.

When the entrance was found, it proved to be a sort of pit, formed by the caving in of the earth, at a point where the excavation had approached too near the surface. Descending its side they found a hole partly concealed by weeds, and barely large enough to admit them one at a time, creeping on hands and knees. But once within, Mutius lighted a torch, and they found themselves in the familiar galleries. Philip's heart beat freely again, and he felt his strength renewed; but they had still a long way to go in the narrow, winding passages, sometimes mounting, sometimes descending stairs, sometimes clambering over piles of rubbish, and frequently obliged to stop and rest on account of their more feeble companion; but at last they came into the more frequented part of the vast labyrinth; lights gleamed, the space became more open, friendly voices were heard, and the weary girl felt motherly arms around her, and, sinking her head on the kind shoulder, she wept for very joy.

"Let her be with me a little while," said the bishop's sister, the Lady Helena, as she saw the startled look in the timid eyes when they met the curious glances of those standing around. "She can hardly realise yet that she is safe among friends."

They all left her to the repose she so much needed, and though the chamber was small and stony, it was filled with such an atmosphere of tender love and protecting care as the poor forsaken child had hardly ever dreamed of, and its influence was so sweet to her that she soon forgot all her dangers in a peaceful slumber, for she was safe at last.

WE again dropped across each other, as usual, in the wilds. Not that we did not meet now and then within the precincts of civilisation; we had, and enjoyed ourselves too; but all my more sensational experiences in the company of this sterling good but extraordinary man happened when we were thrown together far removed from the haunts of our fellow-countrymen. You see, I held—off and on—charge of a range that followed Sparkes' railway. My work lay along it. I was constantly up and down, marching, station by station, during the cool weather, and travelling by train or trolley when the awful heats or soaking monsoon supervened; while Sparkes, as traffic officer, was "all over the shop"—here to-day, there to-morrow—and it was thus we so often collided.

We had just undergone a curious adventure, in which two ladies, fresh from England, played the heroines' parts, and wherein Sparkes and I pretty prominently figured. For the purposes of this tale I will premise to the extent of mentioning that my chum had become seized with a longing to present one of these ladies with a tiger-skin, to carry back to England as a memento of the adventure I allude to, and which, by the way, had a most successful outcome. The venue of the occurrence lay in a lone hill fort, a few miles off the railway, whither Sparkes and I had wandered one day, and where we met the two ladies, who had journeyed to the spot all the way from home. But that, as Kipling says, is another story; now for this one.

There was a weird sense of loneliness, a desolation about the interior of this fort that chilled one to the marrow, and an intense silence reigned, heavy in its oppressiveness. There stood the travellers' bungalow, very seldom used since the opening of the railway; large trees environed it, and the undergrowth flourished rank and luxuriant. We took possession of one wing of the

house, and summoned the Sepoy or military pensioner in charge to question him on the subject of sport.

"Any wild animals to be had, Sepoy?" I asked the man in the vernacular.

"They say that cheetahs and hyenas lurk in the fort, sir, and though I have never seen either, I have heard them during the night. We are afraid to remain in this lonely place, so, as soon as evening falls, we always go down to the village at the foot of the hill. But there is a tiger, sir; I saw him only the other evening. The animals get through the breaches in the walls, lie hidden during the day, and go down to the plain at night for prey."

"By jingo! it's getting interesting," cried Sparkes. "Look here," he continued to the Sepoy, "has no one ever attempted to kill or capture the tiger?"

"Yes, sir; a few months ago, owing to a complaint by the village folks, the district collector came here to try and catch the beast, which had been destroying cattle for a long time. The gentleman had a trap made, which was baited with live goats for several nights; but to no purpose; the collector had brought up too many followers. The whole fort swarmed with men, so the tiger took the alarm and was never caught. The trap is lying where they made it, and is in good order."

"And the beast, you say, is still about?"

"Yes, sir."

"By Jove! Hervey, here's a chance for my skin; shall we have a try?"

"Yes; let's go and see the trap this evening."

I instructed the Sepoy to be round about four o'clock to conduct us to the trap and show us over the fort. Sparkes fretted and fumed, and, as was his wont whenever more than usually excited, paced up and down, as if on sentry-go.

"I say!" he exclaimed, suddenly coming to a halt before me, "I don't half like the idea. Hang it all! there'll be no *éclat* in giving Mrs. Kent the skin of a beast I did not shoot in the open; sounds mean."

"What sounds mean?"

"Why, trapping the brute, and then giving him his quietus through the bars of a cage!"

"And the alternative?"

"Shoot the beggar while he's outside—could point to the skin then—spoil of my gun, don't you know—killed him squarely, and all that sort of thing."

"What! risk your life for a mere whim, when you have at hand a perfectly safe and laudable way of satisfying it?"

"Would sound mean, nevertheless," persisted Sparkes.

"Nonsense, man! Do you imagine that either Mrs. Kent or her daughter will appreciate the gift the less when they learn that we trapped the tiger, and you shot him safely? Besides, what do they know of the danger of facing these animals—women not a month in the country? A skin is a skin, and you may be sure they'll make much of it among their home friends, and sing your praises right enough, no matter how you procured it."

"All right, all right, hang it! don't grow eloquent over it. You are always preaching prudence, though there's not a year's difference between us."

"Believe me, old chap, 'twill be but common and sensible prudence. Was there no trap available, 'twould be a different pair of shoes; we would stalk the brute, or shoot him from a *machan* (platform made on a tree), or organise a beat; but as it is, let's cage him, and once in I'll stand by to see you send a bullet through his skull."

* * * * * * *

That evening, after tea, shouldering our rifles as a precautionary measure, and accompanied by the Sepoy, we proceeded to inspect the tiger-trap. We found it in a remote corner of the fortifications, at the end of a species of *cul de sac*, formed by the bastion wall on the one hand,

and a natural ridge of rock on the other. This ridge of granite—evidently left untouched by the builders as too formidable to cut away—was about twenty yards in length, and almost equalling the bastion in height; the two ran parallel, about fifteen yards apart, and the space was shut in at the further end by the rampart proper, which continued at right angles to the bastion aforesaid. There were a lot of trees and undergrowth in and about the place, affording an ideal cover for tigers and their kind. The trap was merely an exaggeration of the ordinary box rat-trap, made of stout timber bars, roughly put together, but quite strong enough for the purpose required. The door was up, kept so by a cross-beam, that, playing on a pair of shears, caught on to the notched head of the bait-pole which protruded from the interior of the cage through two of the roof-bars. The bait would be attached to the nether extremity of the pole; and as the animal, in seizing the meat, would naturally pull towards the exit, such movement would result in the release of the supporting cross-beam, and the downfall of the door. We carefully examined the whole apparatus and found it in working order; so we now set about making our arrangements.

"What's the best thing to bait this with, Sepoy?" I asked, indicating the trap.

"A sheep or goat, sir. It had better be killed here, so that the smell of the blood may attract the tiger."

"What would be the proper time to do this?"

"In the afternoon, sir; the tiger has never been seen earlier. He remains hidden in his lair all day, and wakes up, as the sun goes down, to descend the hill in search of prey."

"Which he won't do if he finds something ready at hand to eat nearer home, eh?"

"*Allah* knows, sir; your honours can try."

"Have you any idea where his lair is?"

"No, sir; I don't think he remains in any particular spot. The entire fort is open to him—the cheetahs and hyenas would not dare to dispute with him."

"And there is only one?"

"To the best of my belief, sir; though a second voice has been heard occasionally."

"A tigress, I suppose?"

"Maybe, sir."

"The tiger is not a man-eater, is he?"

"No, sir; since he has haunted this hill, now more than three years, we have never heard of his attacking human beings."

"I wonder if he's close by now, watching us?" muttered Sparkes.

"Don't suggest the idea!" I exclaimed. "Come along! All right, Sepoy; here's a rupee, buy a goat. Have it slaughtered here, and hang up the carcass as I have shown you; understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Set about it at once, and we will come here again in the morning."

After tiffin, or luncheon, Sparkes and I got into our easy-chairs, smoked, chatted, and finally slumbered. I was tired, and my sleep must have been sound, for when I awoke with a start it was to find myself alone, the shadows lengthened out, while the tinkle of cups and saucers in the verandah announced that the servants were laying afternoon tea.

"Where is the gentleman?" I inquired, going out into the verandah.

"We know not, sir," replied my "boy"; "we have not seen him."

"Strange," I muttered, and went round to the back to prosecute my inquiries. No, no one knew—no one had seen my friend. At first I was not concerned at his absence; I thought he might be near at hand, taking sketches of some of the numerous inscriptions on the fort walls, on slab, stones, and elsewhere; but when, after my tea, on returning to our room, I noticed that his rifle was not resting in its corner, I concluded that, finding me hopelessly asleep, he had

gone off on his "own hook" somewhere, possibly down the hill to get a long shot at "jinka," or species of small deer peculiar to those parts, and herds of which we had already noted grazing on the plain. I put on my cap, assumed my rifle, descended to the hamlet, and asked if our horsekeepers or the people about had seen the "tall gentleman," as the natives usually styled him. No; he had not passed that way. Now somewhat alarmed, I retraced my steps, hoping to find he had turned up in the interval, and if he had not, I determined to get together a party and search for him. I began to imagine all sorts of things; perhaps, poor chap, he had fallen—broken his leg or something; he had got into a hole; or—"Hah! I have it!" I exclaimed aloud, as the thought flashed across my brain; "he has gone to see if the tiger is trapped. I'll just go after him." With this intent, therefore, on re-entering the fort gate, instead of proceeding over to the bungalow, I turned off sharp to the left, towards the spot we had visited in the morning. As I went, I became alive to the difficulty of the task before me. It was near sundown, about the time for "stripes" to be waking up, and I was alone. I slipped a cartridge into my rifle, and carried it at the ready. I looked about me cautiously. Given that Sparkes had gone to the trap, where should I find him? Would it not be more than likely that the tiger, attracted by the slaughtered goat, would be in the vicinity of the trap by now, if not actually at it, possibly in it?

I had to exercise the utmost caution. Perhaps Sparkes had hit upon some "dodge" of his own; perhaps he was in ambush somewhere, bent, after all, on shooting the beast rather than allow him to be caged; my summary appearance on the scene might not only spoil sport, but might even jeopardise my friend, or me, or both. I accordingly made up my mind to avoid approaching by the *cul de sac*. I was close to the rampart; I climbed it at a spot where the inner facing had fallen in, and, creeping stealthily along till I came to the bastion, I peered over the crenulated parapet into the blind alley beneath. I could just see the trap; large trees curtailed the view of the ground immediately in front of it; but what on earth was that in the cage? I made out the carcass of the goat, lashed to the end of the bait-pole; but there, at its side, kneeling on one knee, with his rifle at the ready, and his gaze intently fixed before him, was—Sparkes! I saw him distinctly through the bars of the trap; there was an eager, expectant look in his steady eye; his pose was firm and motionless; his finger on the trigger of his piece.

I marvelled at the sight; but when I further saw that the *door was up*, I realised the terrible danger my friend's hare-brained recklessness had placed him in. The tiger might make his appearance at any moment; Sparkes *might* drop him at the first shot; but the chances were equally to the contrary, for, though a fair marksman, he was at the best but an inexperienced *shikaree* (sportsman). Then again, I knew that, unless struck in some vital part, a wounded tiger—man-eater or not—always charges on being hit; and, breech-loader though he held in his hand, would Sparkes have time to slap in another cartridge before the beast, infuriated with pain, sprang on him through that open door?

All these thoughts raced through my mind like successive flashes of lightning. How could I help him?—how succour him? I had learnt to love that heedless, joyous spirit with more than a brother's love; he had endeared himself to me in a thousand ways; and here he was, within fifty feet of where I crouched, in the gravest peril, and I practically unable to aid him! My tongue cleaved to the roof of my mouth; I tried to whisper his name, but my voice refused its office; how could I attract his attention?—how place him out of—— Then, as if God had spoken to me, I realised that if that door could only be shut, my friend would be put out of immediate danger; for, with those stout bars protecting him, he might laugh at the tiger, and shoot him down in perfect safety. I again essayed my voice; no, I could not speak. I was on the point of attracting his attention by throwing a small stone at him, when he suddenly jerked his rifle to his shoulder; *simul-*

taneously I raised mine; there was a dual report, followed by a terrible roar, and when the smoke lifted I saw—what?—*the door down;* the tiger, streaming with blood from a wound in the side, rampant on his hind legs against the trap bars, scratching splinters from the stout timbers in futile attempts to reach his enemy within. Then another spurt of flame from the interior of the trap, and the big cat, falling over on his head, gave a few kicks and died. Sparkes' second shot, with muzzle almost touching the brute, had blown its brains to the four winds of heaven!

"Are you hurt, old man?" I asked, at length finding utterance.

"Halloa! it's you. Thought I heard some one fire. Oh, I'm all right; but hang it! how am I to get out of this? Come down from your roost, Hervey, and help me to raise this awful door."

WHEN I SAW THAT THE DOOR WAS UP, I REALISED THE TERRIBLE DANGER MY FRIEND'S HARE-BRAINED RECKLESSNESS HAD PLACED HIM IN.—p. 71.

Close by was a ruined bit of wall; I hastily climbed down, and in a few minutes released my friend.

"Fortunate that thing dropped when it did," said he, "or I should have been mauled to ribbons, perhaps chawed up entirely. Can you account for it?"

"I think I can," I replied, smiling.

"How?"

"I'll give you a hoist up; go and examine the top of the bait-pole."

"Whatever for?"

"To ascertain what caused the door to come down."

He gave me a look of incredulity as I helped him up. However, he clambered across and stooped over the projecting end of the bait-pole.

"Why," he exclaimed, "if there's not a bullet embedded in the wood! Did you fire in this direction, Hervey? When I heard the second report I made sure that the feller —whoever he was—had taken a shot at the varmint."

"I never saw the varmint till he came for you, and reared himself up against the cage."

"Well, why did you fire at this wretched piece of wood? Your bullet might have glanced and perforated me."

"Not likely I'd miss such a mark at a few paces."

"WHY," HE EXCLAIMED, "IF THERE'S NOT A BULLET EMBEDDED IN THE WOOD!"

"No; and you've hit it fair and square; but, man! what made you fire at it at all?"

"To lower the door."

"To lower the door!" he echoed.

"Yes, 'twas a sudden inspiration, in which—as things have turned out—I see the finger of God. At the very moment you pulled the trigger, I fired at that bit of wood; and you know the result."

He understood it now. "That I am unhurt," he said in altered tones, climbing down from his perch, and flinging his arms round my neck. "Dear old chap!" he murmured, "you have saved my life; God bless you!"

We were both affected well-nigh to tears, for the tension had been powerful, and the reaction correspondingly unnerving. There, in that solitude, with the dead tiger at our feet, we stood face to face, and heart to heart; our souls went out to each other, and however

strong our mutual regard may have hitherto been, the bond of union that held us was cemented tenfold during those few minutes' indulgence of intense feeling, when one sweet touch of nature made us more than ever kin!

"But what induced you to try on such a mad trick, in spite of my advice too?" I asked, as we wended our way back to the bungalow.

"Well, you see, I thought there'd be really more *éclat* in presenting Mrs. Kent with the skin if I shot the beast in the open instead of first trapping him. I knew you'd try and dissuade me; so when you were comfortably asleep, I just sneaked out unseen by a soul. The rest you know."

"But why on earth did you not lower the door? You could have shot the beast as easily through the bars, and in safety."

"Would have sounded mean," he replied laconically.

I stared at him, and "dried up."

Fame and Fortune.

By W. C. Metcalfe,

Author of "Undaunted," "Honours Divided," "All Hands on Deck."

"SO you've arrived at last—eh? Well, well, well, there's a likeness certainly; yes, you're like your mother. Here, stand up straight and let me have a good look at you! Well, you look fit enough for roughing it in Africa; how is your health?"

"Very good indeed, Uncle," I replied, adding that I should be glad to begin my duties as soon as possible.

"Ah, that's what I like to hear; now I'll shake you by the hand," and suiting the action to the word, my uncle gave me a hearty grasp and squeeze. "I like to hear young fellows talk like that," he remarked during the operation.

This is the greeting I received from Mr. George Marsden, an uncle on my mother's side, and an ivory merchant at Lahn on the west coast of Africa. At his invitation I had left home and gone to take up a position in his office. Rough and somewhat brusque though he was in manner, yet my uncle George possessed a very warm heart and was generous to a fault, and (as I was soon made to learn) had a very special regard for manliness and pluck, and a corresponding contempt for any man in whom these estimable virtues were lacking. He had been master of a ship for many years trading between Liverpool and the west coast of Africa, but had retired to enter upon business as an ivory merchant, and was now prospering well.

"Your aunt and cousins and Bella are out just now," resumed my uncle, motioning to me to take a seat, "but I'm expecting them in every moment—why, bless me, there they are now!" as the sound of voices was heard in the passage, and a few moments afterwards the party, headed by Mrs. Marsden, filed into the room and gave me a hearty welcome. Mrs. Marsden was a stout, good-tempered and middle-aged lady, her three daughters vivacious,

chatty, and pretty, and Bella—an adopted daughter—charming in the extreme. I fell madly in love with her at once. Tea was brought in by a negro servant and we chatted pleasantly during the social repast. The conversation at one time turned upon business and the ivory market, and my uncle turning round sharply to me asked if I were a good shot and knew how to use a rifle. I replied that I had served in a volunteer corps for five years and had always been accounted a good shot.

"Pshaw!" exclaimed my uncle contemptuously; "shooting at a fixed target is one thing, but shooting at an enraged elephant is quite another; isn't that so, girls?"

"Of course, father, of course," chorussed the young ladies emphatically, two of them turning to look out of the window to hide the smile on their faces. I felt just the least bit uncomfortable; I had gone out prepared to make a great impression, and this was the first shock I received.

"Well, Dick!" my uncle resumed, "you shall have an opportunity of proving your mettle, I'll warrant you that, and soon too, for I'm in want of more tusks, and the price bids fair to rise; you're game to try your hand, eh?" this with a sly look at the girls.

I replied that I should only be too happy to do so.

As I lay awake for a great part of that night, worried almost to death by the persistent attacks of the mosquitoes, my thoughts were greatly occupied with my new position. What a bluff old fellow was my uncle! I wondered if he really meant all he said. At any rate, I resolved to do my best to prove to him that I was not deficient in courage—that would please him, no doubt, and the cousins and Bella! Oh, I thought I could do anything, risk anything to win a smile from her! How pretty she was! her sweet face was mirrored in my imagination all those long wakeful hours. I rose early, and though feeling unrefreshed, dressed and went down-stairs. I found my aunt and the girls all astir, and received a warm matutinal greeting, and the former with a curious look on her good-tempered face asked me if I had spent a good night. I was fain to confess that I had not, as the mosquitoes were so troublesome.

"I thought not—you're a new-comer; they always attack new-comers fiercely. However, you will get used to them soon. You will find your uncle outside, Dick!" she broke off somewhat abruptly.

I strolled out into the grounds. How strange and interesting everything around me looked! the foliage, how luxuriant! Clumps of bananas, the oil palm, the mangrove, the dragon-tree, beautiful varieties of the acacia, grasses, shrubs, bushes, lovely ferns and heathers; all, all were to be seen growing around in that full luxuriant beauty—so characteristic of the tropical regions.

I found my uncle busy mending a fence with hammer and nails.

"Good-afternoon, Dick; how did you sleep, eh?"

"Good-morning, Uncle," I replied; "it is early though, isn't it? you said afternoon just now."

My uncle made no reply, but went on hammering.

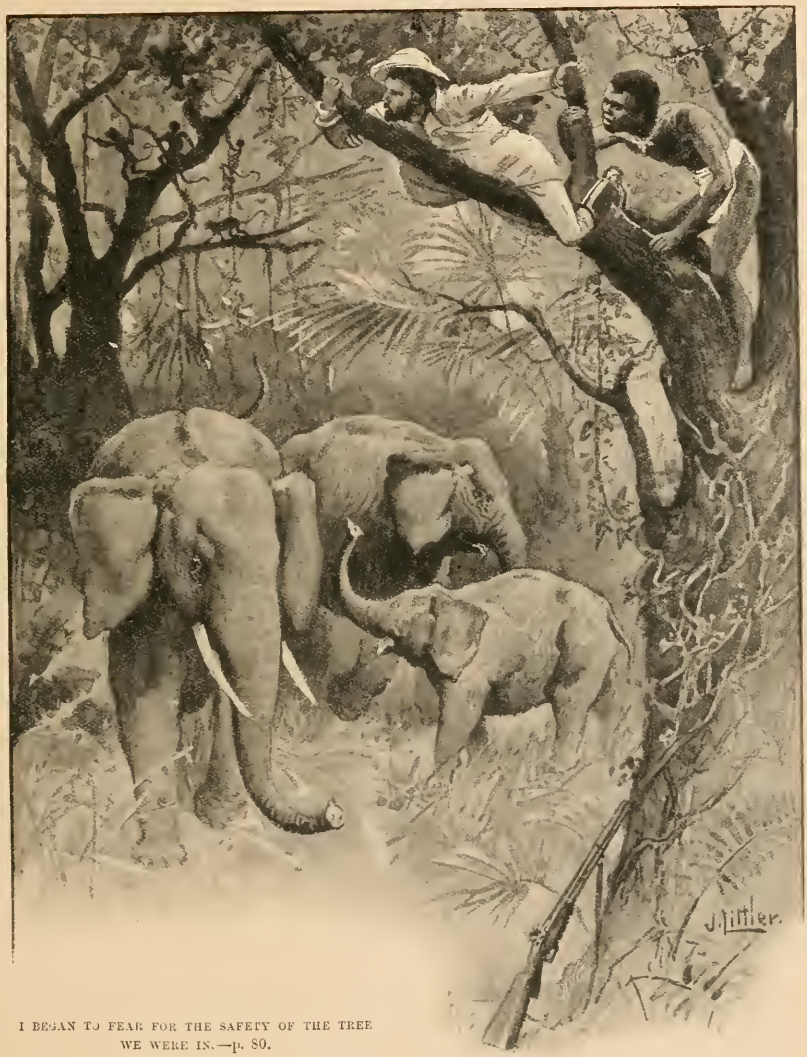
At breakfast the topic of conversation was elephant-hunting, and my uncle informed me that he had ordered his chief hunter, "Chuffey"—a negro—to organise a party to sally forth on the following morning, for he had heard from his agent that there were elephants about.

"You can ride, of course?" he asked, turning to me.

I nodded.

Upon the following morning the big powerful negro, "Chuffey," with a large party of natives armed with spears, assembled in front of the house, and were harangued by my uncle in native language, which I did not then understand.

"You will ride to G—— which is some twenty miles from here," said my uncle, turning to me—"Chuffey knows the way; and when you reach that place, go and see my agent, 'Tokey,' and he will tell you all the news and direct you where to go. Now, get aboard your horse and be off!"



I BEGAN TO FEAR FOR THE SAFETY OF THE TREE WE WERE IN.—p. 80.

Bidding farewell to my aunt, cousins, and Bella, I mounted my horse, and with Chuffey, also mounted and leading the way, we set off at a walking pace and were soon in the thick woods which surrounded my uncle's dwelling.

I found Chuffey a very intelligent and interesting companion, and learned from him a great deal about elephants and elephant-hunting, although he could only speak in broken English.

"Angry elephaut, very savage, run very fast," he said; "sometimes have to climb tree or be killed dead."

Upon my asking him if he expected we should meet with any before we arrived at G—— he shook his head and said he did not think we should.

"P'r'aps go long, long way before see any elephant," he added; "Tokey, he will know all about it, Tokey clever chief—master's agent."

We arrived at G——, a small native village consisting of but a few scattered huts, about five in the evening, and I was introduced to Tokey, a big muscular native who occupied the largest and best hut, and who could speak English fairly well. He examined me with a peculiar interest.

"You strange Englishman not understand elephant, you stop here all this night. Morrer mornin' go out, plenty natives—plenty elephant about."

We passed the night in Tokey's hut, and early the following morning started off, Tokey himself accompanying us armed with a rifle. Our track lay for miles through a densely-wooded forest with such thick undergrowth as to seriously impede our progress. The weather was very sultry and most oppressive, and although clad in loose white flannels I felt the perspiration streaming from out of every pore of my skin.

"Very hot," remarked Tokey, wiping his ebony face with his shirt-sleeve; "by-by storm come, plenty rain."

On we went, until we were suddenly arrested by Chuffey's voice. Upon asking Tokey what was the matter, he put his finger to his mouth and hissed out, "Elephant! Listen!"

I could hear nothing but a sound as it were of branches being broken off, and this I concluded was being done by some of the natives ahead. Not another sound could be heard save the light rustling of the wind as it soughed through the tree-tops. Suddenly we were startled by a loud peal of thunder which seemed to rend the very heavens, and I felt my horse growing restive beneath me. Then down came the rain like a perfect deluge in true tropical style, and I was wet to the skin in a few moments.

Chuffey, who was in advance, beckoned to us to follow quietly, and we proceeded once more for about three hundred yards, when he again stopped and motioned to us to do likewise. The snapping, chawing sound grew more distinct, and I asked Tokey what it all meant. A look of something like contempt swept across his dark features as he replied, "Elephants! elephants! Hist! watch Chuffey!"

Chuffey's movements became so extraordinary that I was led to believe that our prey must be very near, and it seemed to me that the natives also were of the same opinion, for they held their spears in readiness and watched their leader's every movement in the keenest manner possible. I felt myself growing very excited also, and as I grasped my trusted rifle firmly and sat in expectancy on my horse I was filled with many emotions, the most prominent being a burning desire to achieve distinction and please my bluff old uncle, and above all, Bella.

A signal from Chuffey, who had now dismounted and was making his horse fast to a tree, arrested my thoughts and brought me to a sense of the grim reality of my position. Tokey also dismounted and told me to do the same.

"Get gun ready to shoot!" said my sable companion very calmly, "elephant near. Make horse fast same as me!"

We tied our horses up to trees and stole forward gently on foot, the natives gathering around, their dusky faces betraying great signs of eagerness; it was evident to me that our game was very near as the snapping sound became more and more distinct. Presently Chuffey stopped and his whole attitude was that of a man who was watching something very keenly. I looked inquiringly at Tokey.

"Chuffey see elephant! quiet! he tell us to come!" as the hunter with body leaning forward beckoned to us with his hand behind his back.

Slowly and cautiously we crept along through the dense and matted undergrowth of trailing briers and ferns until we reached Chuffey.

"Look! look!" he hissed out, and drawing a branch aside very quietly as he spoke. "Look, see! three elephants, one bull, one cow, one calf! Three elephants, three guns; me fire at big bull, you," to Tokey, "fire at cow, and you," turning to me, "fire at little calf! Now!"

It was as the black hunter said—there before us in a more open part of the wood were three elephants, each engaged in breaking off the small branches of the trees with their trunks and chewing them up with an evident relish. Chuffey fired, and a shrill scream from the big bull told us that his shot had taken effect.

"Keep back!" he hissed out as I was pressing eagerly forward; "old bull he turn round and see you! Ha!"

In compliance with his order I stepped quickly back, but unfortunately in my hurry whilst doing so my feet got entangled in a briar and over I went, my gun discharging itself at the same time, most providentially without doing harm to any one.

"Run for your lives!" shouted Chuffey. "They are coming! Run! run!" and he and the natives scattered in all directions.

A succession of short, sharp, trumpeting screams, and the crashing sound of small trees and branches as they were borne down, snapped, swept aside by the terrible charge of the infuriated animals told me what had been the result of my unfortunate accident and Chuffey's shot. I dare not look round, but, with Tokey a little in advance of me, ran for my very life.

My companion made for a large tree directly in front of us.

"Climb quick, never mind gun, put it behind tree! Climb!" and with the agility of a cat he sprang on to the trunk and was soon on the lower branches. Leaving my gun at the foot of the tree I hastily ascended, and had just reached the spot by my companion's side when the three animals rushed madly by beneath us. The sight was a novel one to me and fully impressed me with the strength and majesty of these huge creatures, as trees of no mean size went down under their terrific onrush, and thick bushes were swept aside as though they had been but paper. What had become of Chuffey and the other natives I did not know, but concluded they had escaped safely. The three animals had passed out of sight, and I was just about to descend with the view of obtaining my rifle, when Tokey stopped me.

"Don't go! elephant come back! See!" and he pointed to a clump of trees about one hundred yards distant. "Elephant under tree!"

Scarcely had he spoken before from out of the trees in question the three elephants came charging along with their enormous ears outspread like huge fans, to the accompaniment of a quick succession of short, sharp, trumpeting screams. On they rushed at a rate truly surprising for creatures of their enormous bulk, until they came to a dead halt within twenty yards of the tree in which Tokey and I were lodging. The big male elephant, who had been struck by the ball from Chuffey's rifle and was bleeding from his right shoulder, cocking his broad ears began snuffing about, then with a loud scream, and trunk held high in the air, he made direct for our tree, the cow and the calf following him. Oh, how I longed for my rifle! I felt I would have given all I possessed for that trusty weapon then, but to attempt to get it was quite out of the question. I next began to fear for the safety of the tree we were in. The creatures had already

THE BODY OF POOR CHUFFEY WAS ENCIRCLED AND HELD HIGH IN THE AIR BY THE TRUNK OF THE MADDENED ANIMAL.—p. 83.

given such proof of their enormous strength that I thought it quite possible they might succeed in throwing down the one we were on. I mooted my fears to Tokey, who, however, only grinned and showed his fine white teeth and remarked—

"No knock tree down, tree too big—quite safe. See! elephant see us now! All come now under tree—p'r'aps stop here all night!"

It was as he said, the animals had seen us, and trumpeting shrilly they stopped beneath the tree, and raising their huge heads began pulling off the branches right and left in their rage.

How I prayed that my gun might escape their notice!

In his hurry to escape Tokey had also thrown his rifle down, so that Chuffey alone, so far as we knew, possessed one. Branch after branch was snapped off by the two full-grown monsters with an ease truly wonderful to behold, and the whole tree, big as it was, shook and trembled, until, notwithstanding Tokey's reassuring words, I began to fear they would really pull it down.

"Tree all right," said Tokey, who read my fears; "by-by get tired."

For at least an hour the animals continued their attacks on the tree, and I had become more confident of its ability to withstand them; then, there being no more branches within their reach, they began tearing off the bark with their huge tusks. Now I trembled more than ever for the safety of my gun, which was resting stock down and the muzzle upwards against the foot of the tree, for whilst engaged with the branches their heads had been raised and they had not of course noticed it. We shouted aloud for Chuffey, but no answer came. I prayed that something might happen to divert the attention of the beasts and cause them to abandon all further attempts to get at us, but it seemed to me that our only hope, under God, rested on Chuffey and the natives becoming aware of our position and coming to our assistance.

Where, I wondered, were Chuffey and his black followers? I asked my companion if he could form any opinion, as they had not answered our shouting, but he only shook his head and said very calmly—

"No can tell where Chuffey is, but Chuffey good hunter, he know his business; p'r'aps come now, by-by we see."

Thud, thud, thud, the blows continued, until it seemed to me that the animals would never desist, and then suddenly my companion, whose keen eyes had been busy peering all around him, clutched me by my shoulder, and pointing to a clump of bushes which grew beneath some palms, said—

"Look, look! Chuffey he come!"

Scarcely had he spoken when the sharp report of a rifle rang through the forest, and then with a wild scream the big male elephant measured his length on the ground. Following this came the shouts of the natives as they rushed from out of their hiding-places all around and threw their spears with admirable dexterity at the two timid animals who remained for a short time by the body of the big bull, and then with ears cocked and with trunks held high in the air dashed into the woods away from their pursuers.

"Come down and get gun!" shouted Tokey, as he let himself fall from the branch he was on.

I quickly followed, and with a feeling of delight, such as I had never before experienced, grasped my rifle, and with Tokey by my side joined in the chase, directed by the crashing sound made by the beasts in their wild rush.

"By-by come to water," said my companion, "not deep, can cross. Listen! elephants in water now!" as a loud splashing sound bore evident confirmation of the truth of his statement. "Come on," and away we plunged, until we found ourselves on the banks of a small stream and saw the natives wading across in front of us. We waded across the stream as fast as we could, and had just clambered up the reedy bank, when a wild piercing shriek reached our ears and arrested our movements for the time being.

"Massa, massa! come quick! Chuffey he killed," came a voice from the woods, followed by

more agonising screams and the crashing sound, now so familiar to us, of beasts forcing themselves through the woods.

"Look out! elephants come back, mind gun! shoot quick!" shouted Tokey, who having mislaid his gun had snatched a spear from one of the natives.

The words had barely escaped his lips when the huge cow elephant together with the calf came rushing out of the wood, and then a sight met our gaze which filled us with horror and dismay. The body of poor Chuffey was encircled and held high in the air by the trunk of the maddened animal, who seemed to only await some favourable opportunity of dashing it to pieces. It was a moment of extreme peril, and no time was to be lost if his life was to be saved; at any moment the animal might wreak its revenge on the poor native whose cries still rent the air. Tokey gallantly faced the animal with his spear, but was tumbled into the bushes in a moment by the calf, who, apparently not knowing exactly what next to do, lifted its trunk and screamed furiously. Spears were now thrown from the other side of the river at the cow elephant, which, after plunging some distance in the stream, turned back again to make a retreat into the woods, still bearing high in its trunk the body of poor Chuffey.

Darting aside, I took up a favourable position amongst the long reedy grass which grew on the banks of the river, and, taking careful aim, fired, and to my joy saw the huge beast fall heavily into the water whilst the calf retreated into the woods. Thinking the cow had received its death-wound, we all rushed eagerly to the spot to finish it off quickly, when suddenly it rose without Chuffey, whom it had dropped when it fell, and with trunk on end, and trumpeting wildly, made direct for me.

At this moment I felt the truth of my uncle's remark. "Shooting at a fixed target is one thing, but shooting at an enraged elephant is quite another." There was a wonderful difference indeed, my coolness and courage were taxed to the very utmost. The sight of that huge maddened creature charging furiously through trees and bushes, with broad ears outspread like two enormous fans, the trunk raised, and accompanied by the short, sharp, trumpeting screams of rage, was enough to disconcert the nerves of the very stoutest. In my haste to see the effect of my previous shot, which I had considered fatal, I had never given a thought to reloading my rifle, thus the danger of my position was considerably increased, for I judged that, humanly speaking, my life depended on the weapon. I heard the shouts of the natives around me, but felt no encouragement therefrom, for they were not near enough to the scene of danger. Two ways of escape lay open to me—either I must climb a tree as before, or I must in some way or other find time to load my rifle and shoot the creature. I looked round hastily, but could see no tree which could be climbed in sufficient time to escape my pursuer. I must at all hazards try to load my gun. Nearer and nearer came the monster, the very ground trembling beneath its heavy weight; not a moment was to be lost if I would be saved. Right in front of me was a

big stout tree, but one impossible for me to climb, for no branches grew near enough to the ground for me to lay hold of. As I neared this tree an idea suddenly struck me. I stood facing the monster with my back to the broad trunk with teeth clenched and nerves braced up for the trial. On came the enraged creature, her trumpet-cries increased as though in fierce exultation at the prospect of a sure and speedy revenge. I waited, with a terrible effort, I must admit, until the animal was about fifteen yards from me, then, suddenly darting aside, I loaded my gun as hurriedly as possible, as the animal in its blind rage, and unable to check its speed, rushed with a terrible thud against the big tree.

The impact was tremendous, the tree shook with the force, and the elephant, stunned and bewildered and almost motionless, offered the chance I was seeking. I fired, and for the second time it fell to the ground, this time dead—it had received its mortal wound! In a few moments the natives gathered around, and Tokey congratulated me warmly on the success I had achieved, and shook me heartily by the hand.

"Massa Englishman brave, clever man," he said, "Massa Marsden very pleased, get two good pair tusks."

Upon my asking how Chuffey was, I was told, to my great relief, that although bruised and frightened he was not seriously injured, and would be able to return to Lahn on horseback.

"Chuffey he say you save his life," added Tokey, his broad ebony face beaming with smiles; "Chuffey no forget, Chuffey your slave now and always."

The tusks were cut out from the two big animals by Tokey and the natives, and upon the following morning I set out with Chuffey, who was well enough to ride, with the native party on our way back to Lahn, and in the evening arrived at my uncle's house.

"What! two pairs of tusks, eh? and rare fine ones too! Well, Dick, my boy, let me shake you by the hand! And saved Chuffey's life too, so Tokey says. Bravo, Dick! you have done splendidly!" and my uncle for the second time shook my hand most warmly, whilst my aunt beamed on me, and the young ladies congratulated me. My reader, I will leave you to guess how proud and happy I felt.

* * * * * * *

"Yes, Dick, I have always liked you, and have loved you ever since that first day when you returned with the tusks and I heard that you had saved Chuffey's life."

So said my darling Bella one fine evening two years after the events I have recorded.

"And now, Dick," she continued, "Uncle is so pleased with your success as an elephant-hunter and the fame you have won that he is going to make you a partner in his business and——"

"I am going to make you a partner in my joys, eh, Bella?" I cut in.

"I suppose so, you naughty Dick," she replied shyly.

"I TELL you," insisted the foxy-faced one, "we want a third party; some one to be ready with the spare horses while I'm waiting with the wagon, and you're handin' over the forty-rod to the Injuns."

"While *I'm* handin' of it over!" exclaimed the other, who was only distinguishable from his companion by being, if anything, a trifle dirtier. "I thought when I entered inter pardnership wid you as how you sed *you'd* do the handin' over!"

"Well, hang it! I'll do it, as I've done it before," conceded Isaac—familiarly called Ike—the foxy-faced individual aforesaid. "But we want help, and, as acciydents will happen, s'posing now we could manage to do without our hired man at the 'leventh hour—s'posing he got drunk, or got left behind—you savey?—it might save us the trouble of paying him. I guess the Injuns want all the scalps they kin get in them days, anyhow. There's lots of whisky-soakers around here dead broke that would be only too glad to come."

"Bully for you, pard; you're a nat'ral-born genyius!" exclaimed Pat, in a burst of genuine admiration at his mate's eye to business. This admiration for any one who was a greater villain than himself was the only genuine thing in his composition.

They were a couple of unmitigated scoundrels both, the shady nature of their antecedents being only equalled by their decidedly disreputable appearances. They were camped just outside Fort Brenton, on the banks of the Missouri, and it was the summer of '72, when that town was thronged by a nondescript crowd of trappers, Indians, and Canadian half-breeds, who came down from the north to trade their wagon-loads of buffalo and other skins. Upon the whole it was a tough crowd—very tough.

The two partners emerged from under the shade of their wagon, and went towards two or three of the dead-beats aforesaid, who seemed in that unenviable physical condition known as "suffering recovery," and asked them, one after the other, if they would like to take a job. But, after comprehensive glances at the two worthies, none of them seemed to care about work.

"It 'pears to me, mate," remarked Ike disgustedly and uncharitably to his friend, "that

wherever you go they seem to get on to you—you've got a physog that would spoil any outfit."

Pat was quivering with honest indignation, and was about to retort, when he caught sight of a solitary individual resting under a scraggy tree, with a saddle and bridle lying by his side.

"Shet up, ye fool!" he said to his partner; "here's a chap that looks as if he would like to clear out—let's tackle him."

The man in question was in no way remarkable. A shock head of sandy-coloured hair was in keeping with a face and eyes that always seemed the same. Their expression was inscrutable as that of the sphinx. He wore a dirty pair of cord pants, a shirt in the same condition, and a soft felt hat lay on the ground alongside. Not a man of any obvious perspicacity, and doubtless an easy tool in the proper hands; moreover, he looked like one who had been through the mill, and would not be too scrupulous. At least, so thought the two partners as they stood in front of him.

Then Ike explained their *modus operandi*, telling the stranger how they intended travelling right into Canada with their cargo of contraband whisky, and, seeking out a camp of Cree Indians, trading it for skins.

"You see," he added confidentially, "after we've handed the liquor over we'll have to clear for our nat'ral, the Injun temperyment being sich that when the fire-water begins to work it itches for scalps."

At this pleasant little sally Pat grinned admiringly; but not even the ghost of a smile flitted across the face of the stranger as, with a decidedly Scotch accent, he deliberately said—

"Aweel, I'm thinking there's na hairm in that. I'm yer man—Alexander McTurk of that ilk. I've got twa horses down there by the bit burnie, but I can pick them up when we pull out."

Then, rolling up his blanket, and picking up his saddlery, he betook himself to the camp of the Philistines. There Ike, with an unwonted display of generosity, produced a pannikin and a black bottle, to which the Scot helped himself so liberally that the former repented of his rashness. That night, when it grew dark, they hitched up, pulled into Benton, put the liquor on board, and when the grey dawn broke they were wending their lonely way over gleaming alkali flats and brown stretches of buffalo-grass and sage-bush. It was only when they unhitched at a creek to have their first meal, and to rest during the day, that they noticed their companion's horses.

"Crikey, mate!" remarked the worthy Isaac, "I guess you've got a couple of good cayuses. Didn't know as how you were a judge of horseflesh."

"I'm thinking there are worse horses in the country than these," remarked McTurk. "Anyhow, I came by them honestly." And his eyes wandered absently over the leaders of the team owned by the enterprising partners.

"Hang the haggis-eater!" commented Pat in an aside to his mate. "But, I say, pardner, I guess them horses of his are worth two hundred dollars."

"Hold your tongue, you eejut!" rasped out Ike, looking apprehensively towards the Scot. "If he didn't seem half asleep I'd swear he heard you."

To tell the truth, though within easy ear-shot, McTurk's face was as impassive as that usually observed on a ship's figure-head.

They journeyed leisurely over the rolling prairie.

Their hired man they found invaluable. He did what was required of him quietly and well; but still that did not prevent his masters persecuting him with petty annoyances, which became more pronounced the farther they got from civilisation. McTurk, however, either did not or would not see the slights that were heaped upon him. Nothing seemed to arouse in him the

faintest show of passing interest. Once a cloud of dust and a significant black wave appeared on the eastern horizon, grew on the sight, and rolled eastward. When the whisky-traders saw it, their faces became ashy-grey, and they forgot to swear—a sure sign with them that something was seriously the matter. McTurk gazed upon the strange sight with eyes that seemed utterly indifferent. He rode on, as usual, slowly ahead, his right leg thrown carelessly over the horn of the saddle, and blowing tobacco-smoke into the air. The callous indifference of the man irritated the respectable Isaac.

"I say, pard," he yelled after him disgustedly, "do you know what that there means? Waal, then, it's a buff'ler stampede—millions of buff'ler, mind; and if they happen to come our way, your name's Dennis, sure! You can gamble your pile on that."

Then for the first time the apparently indifferent one asserted himself.

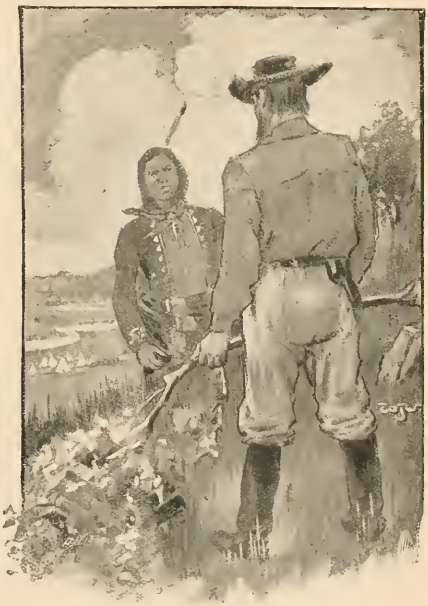
"Aweel, freends," he observed, "if I thocht the beasties would be coming this way, it would na' be sitting here I'd be. But as they'll pass about seeven miles to the north I dinna quite see the use o' fashing my heid, and getting grey in the gills, like some folk I ken."

He rode on again, as if oblivious to all things mundane.

"Darn the fool!" commented the somewhat reassured Ike. "But I'm blowed if I don't think he's more knave than fool. There he goes, sound asleep again!"

At last they crossed the lines and entered Canada. They were now in the wild country on the southern slope of the Cypress Hills. They struck Wild-Horse Creek, and travelled up its grassy bottom. This was the land of the Cree Indians.

One sultry afternoon, when they were camped in a little ravine, under the shade of some cottonwood trees, Ike went to the brow of a neighbouring hill to reconnoitre. They saw him look around, and then gaze intently in a certain direction. In another minute he was signalling to some one with a green bough he had taken with him for that purpose.



SOON AN INDIAN STOOD BESIDE HIM.

Soon an Indian stood beside him, and in a few minutes more Ike returned to the camp, talking volubly to his visitor in Cree.

"Our trip's at an end," explained Pat to McTurk. "It's the band of Indians we've been looking for."

Then solemnly, for there is no ceremony of State more impressive than the joining of hands of the red man, there were mutual introductions.

McTurk was introduced by Ike, with a hint of satire in his speech, to the mighty warrior rejoicing in the name of Young-man-afraid-of-his-wife's-mother, as "The Great Scotty, the Thirsty Rider of the Plains."

After some considerable talk an arrangement was arrived at with the Indian to supply his camp with liquor, skins to be taken in exchange. After a small and judicious foretaste of the

fire-water he withdrew to communicate with his own camp about a mile away. Then a wonderful change came over Ike's manner. Before the arrival of the Indian he had been as sour as vinegar in speech and behaviour, now no one would have thought butter could melt in his mouth. Probably he overdid his part, for McTurk, whom hitherto no amount of abuse or covert sneers had moved, was seen to go behind the wagon with an anxious expression on his face, and deliberately scratch his head. He then came back refreshed, and with a face which outrivalled the complacency observed on that of a street door-knocker. But Ike's change of manner did not end here. He drew off a bottle of whisky from one of the kegs and gave it to McTurk.

"Here, pardner," he said, "drink hearty. I guess it's the last drink you'll have for some time."

He winked to Pat as he saw the avidity with which the sandy-haired one seized the bottle and dispensed with a drinking-cup.

"We'll leave him alone," whispered Ike to his mate, "and if he's not dog-gone in half-an-hour, may I be jiggered! That's all."

"You stay and watch the camp," he said to McTurk. "Pat and I are going to the Injun camp for them skins." And off they went.

McTurk's conduct on their departure was worthy of that strange man. He deliberately helped himself to a drink, and then poured the remainder of the bottle upon the prairie grass. He crawled under the wagon, and lay on his back holding the empty bottle loosely by the neck. The sun had passed out of sight behind the bench, and now a shadow was creeping up the opposite hillside. The running water close by was murmuring strangely to itself, the cotton-wood trees on the opposite side of the coullee assumed fanciful shapes, and signed to him in the most absurd fashion. The nodding sunflowers winked at him with eyes of fire. He was fast slipping into the land of dreams, when, hard by, he heard the dull patter of moccasined feet.

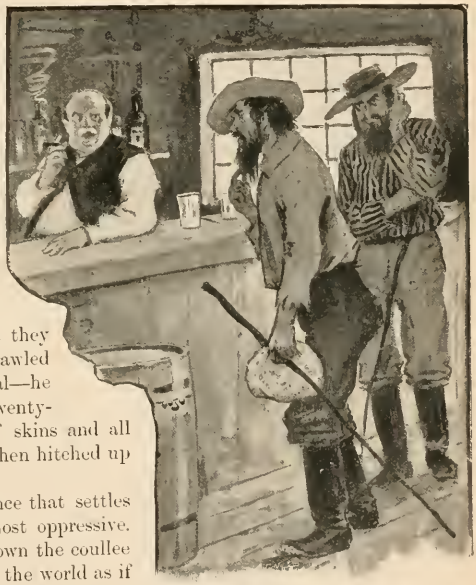
HITCHED UP THE HORSES, TYING HIS OWN TWO BEHIND.

He was wide awake in an instant. It was his comrades returning with some half-dozen Indians carrying bales of skins. Next moment his head dropped back on the turf, he lay flat on his back, his legs and arms were shot out in the most unpicturesque manner possible, and the air resounded with a nasal drone that for finish and tone put his much-beloved native bagpipes in the shade.

The Indians threw their bundles on the ground and crowded round the wagon. Never before had McTurk been honoured with such a large and appreciative audience. It was a triumph for the partners, and an eloquent testimony to the potency of the fire-water. The Crees gave expression to their feelings in many an admiring "Ough! Ough!"

"Now, pardner," said Ike to Pat, as he took the empty bottle from the hand of the apparently drunken manservant, "just fill up this bottle, and when he wakes he'll take another drain and go to sleep again. When we come back from taking the liquor to the camp, we'll hitch up and clear out, not forgetting to take his two mokes. I guess that when the Injuns get on the loose with the fire-water in them, he'll have no more use for them."

"How the beggar sleeps!" commented Pat.



ASKED THEM SOMEWHAT SUSPICIOUSLY WHAT THEIR BUSINESS MIGHT BE.—p. 90.

As soon as the partners, with the Indians carrying the kegs of spirits amongst them, had left the camp, the snores of McTurk ceased as suddenly as they had been called into existence. He crawled from under the wagon, made a hearty meal—he might have little time within the next twenty-four hours for eating—put the bales of skins and all their paraphernalia into the wagon, and then hitched up the horses, tying his own two behind.

It was getting dark, and the eerie silence that settles down on those vast prairie lands was almost oppressive. Then on a breath of wind that strayed down the coullee strange sounds were borne. It was for all the world as if human beings were trying to imitate a pack of hounds in full cry; only the measured beat of the Indian drums told him that the orgie had begun. His employers would soon be back for their team and goods so as to get clear away before the Indians became maddened by the fire-water.

He leapt into the wagon, and, drawing up the side of the coullee, was soon safe upon the bench.

A ruddy glow among the trees far away up the valley caught his attention. He paused for a moment to look. Around a huge fire danced horrible fantastic figures that sent a shiver through him—impish figures, truly, showing in bold relief against the red glare. Long buffalo robes flowed from their shoulders; some seemed to have tails like demons, and nearly all had shaggy heads and manes with great protruding horns. They whooped and yelped. The dance of witches in Alloway's old haunted kirk was not more ghastly. Round and round spun the demons; *pom, pom, pom!* went the hollow-sounding drums. The sight was horrible, fascinating. He roused himself, turned his horses, cracked his quirt, and away the leaders

went at a rattling pace. His partners, who would have sacrificed him, could follow as best they might.

"They called me a haggis-eater!" he cried aloud, steeling his heart, "but it's a far cry to Loch Awe!"

* * * * * * *

A month later two footsore and ragged tramps entered Fort Benton, in Montana. There was a pinched look and the impress as of a mortal terror on their faces. They stopped at a saloon that seemed doing a somewhat quieter business than the others, and the proprietor asked them somewhat suspiciously what their business might be.

Then Ike, for it was indeed our old friend, as if it gave him some relief to unburden his heart, told of the way in which he and his honest mate had lately been victimised. He related how, having handed over the liquor to the Indians, they had gone back to their camp to hitch up and clear out, when they discovered that horses, wagon, skins, and everything had disappeared. Their hired man, whom they had left drunk, had disappeared also. It was a mysterious business altogether. Of late a suspicion as to the part their hired man had played in the matter had been haunting them, but it was an idea too soul-harrowing to entertain. They also related how they had been followed up and chased by the drunken and maddened Indians, and how it was almost a miracle that they were now alive to tell the tale.

The saloon-keeper listened patiently, and when they had done, inquired—

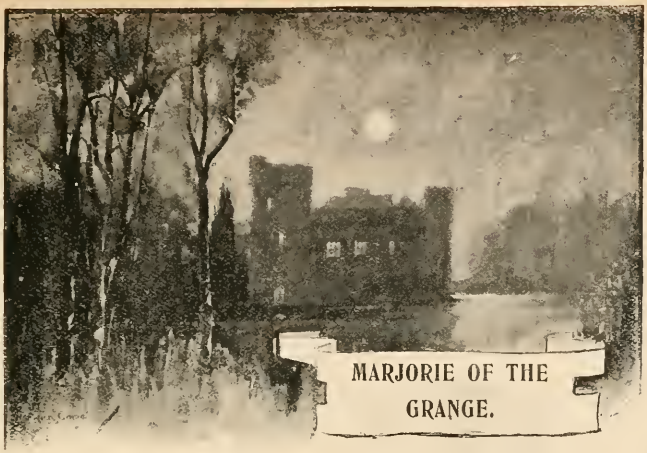
"Had you a couple of bay mares, branded 'M' on the near shoulder, and two roan horses branded 'Bar H' on the off side?"

"That was them," observed Ike and Pat.

"And had your man a great sandy-coloured head of hair like a horse-hair mop, a beard of the same material, and an expression on his face that looked as if it belonged to a graven image?"

"That's him! that's him!" chorussed the surprised and heart-stricken pair. "But you surely don't mean to tell us as how——"

"Waal, that's so," interrupted the storekeeper coolly. "I guess as how it's about three week's ago since that gent came here. He sold the skins over at the store at a stiffish price, and the wagon and team to my neighbour, Deacon Thompson. Two rather goodish saddle-horses he sold to yours truly. He took the first boat down the Missouri. He remarked, as he took a drink with me over this 'ere bar, jest before starting, as how he guessed he'd make for the old home; an honest man and a tenderfoot like himself, he reckoned, were always getting left in a country like this. Nominate your pizins, gentlemen."



MARJORIE OF THE GRANGE.

"MARJORIE! Marjorie!"

There was no answer to the impatient call. Perfect silence reigned in the old garden that lay bathed in sunlight, and a moment later the cry for Marjorie came again.

A boy of fourteen came hurrying from the old Grange down the garden path, but the words were suddenly checked as he caught sight of a dainty little figure perched up close by the rose arbour that she loved, though roses and everything else were unnoticed by the little maid, who was only intent on the business she had in hand.

For fully two minutes Eustace stood watching her, taking in the picture that she made. Marjorie was perfectly oblivious to all that was going on. She had no idea that the boy who was leaving that morning to become the page of the Duke of Grafton was anywhere near her. Her whole mind was intent on the important business of tying a knot.

Eustace recognised his own sword in a moment. In fact, it was its loss that had made him so hurriedly call Marjorie, for he was quite aware that she was the probable culprit, for she was as mischievous as a monkey when the fit took her.

However, this time it was not mischief that had prompted the carrying off of the weapon. Marjorie felt keenly the coming loss of her playmate, and had resolved to send her knight away in the fashion followed by her elders. Her only difficulty being that the sword was heavy and the ribbon not easy to tie in the style she thought Eustace would admire.

But the last minutes were slipping away fast. The knot was tied, at any rate, to his satisfaction, so he said gently, "Thank you, Marjorie, I shall prize your ribbon and keep it always. Now I must be off or I shall keep Sir Ralph waiting. Will you come and see us ride away?"

Marjorie gave him the sword as if she were heartily glad to be rid of the heavy weight, and then she trotted contentedly by the boy's side to the gate where the horses were standing.

"Well, little maid," said her father, "I thought you had forsaken us just at the last hour. What were you so busy upon that you did not hear Eustace's voice? Fair ladies should always see the last of their friends at the gate."

"So I have," Marjorie said. "I was getting a knot to give Eustace to carry into the great world with him. That was what my mother did when she was young."

"My faith, but the lass is beginning right early," ejaculated the knight as he stooped to give his wife his last embrace.

"Farewell, my lady, I pray it may not be long before we meet once more."

"Marjorie," he said, taking the child in his arms, "take care of thy mother while I am away. I leave her to thee, my child. Now, Eustace!"

The small cavalcade moved slowly across the drawbridge, while Marjorie and her mother stood under the shadow of the gate waving a good-bye.

Lady Colvert's eyes were full of tears, but Marjorie's clear voice followed them.

"Come back soon, father. Good-bye, Eustace!"

When Eustace reached London with Sir Ralph Colvert he had little time to think of the quiet home that he had left, or of the child Marjorie whose trust he had carefully put away with his most cherished possessions. Could Marjorie have seen him six months after his departure she would scarcely have recognized her playfellow in the tall youth who was so popular among the ladies of the Duke's household; but though he won many friends, yet he contrived to avoid making enemies, a very different matter to a youth who wished to rise.

It was only a year later that the Civil War broke out, and Eustace found himself busily preparing to follow the Duke in aid of the King.

The youth was by the Duke's side when he fell mortally wounded in one of the early battles, and as soon after as he could, he sought out Sir Ralph and asked him to allow him to be near him if possible in the next engagement; and after some little trouble the knight was able to arrange this for him.

"My mind misgives me," he said one day to Eustace as they rode along together. "I fear I shall never see the Grange again, and my heart is sore at the thought of my wife and my little Marjorie. Lad, should I fall in this war, may I depend on thee to help my dear ones to the best of thy power? Lady Colvert trusts thee, I know, and if things go badly with the King, as I much fear me they may, they will have no one to turn to."

"I will do my best right gladly, Sir Ralph; but why shouldst thou speak so gloomily of the future? Only a few short months, and thou wilt greet thy lady and Marjorie with happy faces at the Grange."

"I would I could believe it; but, alas! I feel convinced it will not be so."

MARJORIE STOOD AT THE OPEN DOOR.—p. 95.

Eustace tried to reason further with him, but all was of no avail; so he gradually changed the topic of conversation, and the subject of the future dropped.

The battle of Naseby followed, and Sir Ralph was killed almost at the beginning; and Eustace realized with dismay that the cause was lost, and that the sooner he set out for the Grange the better for all parties.

The old house looked peaceful and still in the moonlight, when Eustace at last rode towards it. There were several lights at the windows, and he felt sure no ill tidings had reached the family of their fearful loss. Taking off his coat he dropped into the moat and swam across the cold water till he reached the solid ground once more. He had no idea of showing himself until he was able to ascertain that he could appear openly without compromising himself or the others.

Happily he caught sight of Marjorie's slight figure crossing the open door, and he gently whistled the old familiar call so well known to both. He saw the girl stop short, and then she said clearly to some one unseen—

"Is it not a glorious night? I must see the moon over the trees; I will not be long, mother."

Then she came down the steps and wended her way to the old rose arbour.

Eustace gazed at Marjorie as she came towards him in the brilliant moonlight, and he saw that she was rapidly growing into a beautiful girl. Certainly the years of absence had done much for her as for himself.

The girl's light footstep followed the path to the arbour, and there Eustace broke his bitter tidings as best he could to her, and in a short time Lady Colvert, too, heard his tale.

"What will you do?" Eustace asked her. "Sir Ralph bid me aid thee in any way I could, but I fear I may only be the means of fresh trouble if I linger here too long."

"I will go to my sister in Scotland," she replied. "There I shall be safe, and Marjorie will have a friend if I be taken from her. Eustace, thou hadst better cross the sea at once, and not imperil thy life by staying here an hour longer."

"I shall not stir until I have seen you in safety, Lady Colvert," the youth answered, "and already I have a plan in my head. We are but a few miles from the sea. At once we will set forth, and hire a boat in which to sail to Scotland, and I can cross the sea and make my fortune when I have left you in a secure place."

Lady Colvert was only too willing to fall in with any plan, and she and Marjorie at once left the room to make their preparations, while Eustace saw that the horses were saddled for the journey.

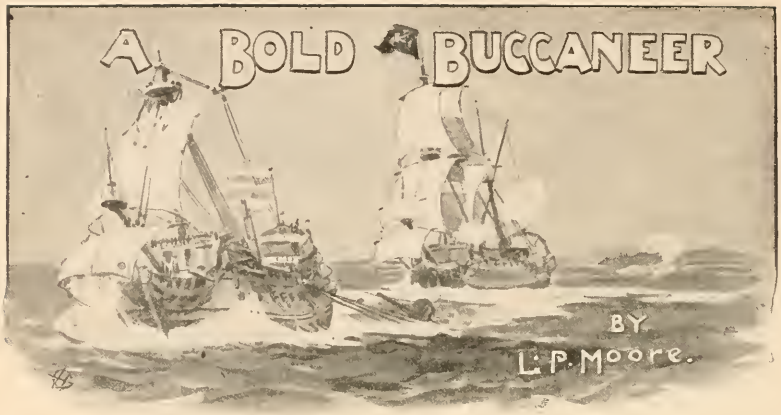
It took him some time to find a boat large enough, whose Captain was willing to take the long voyage to Scotland; but happily Lady Colvert was able to offer a good price, and they started late the next day.

* * * * * * *

It was the summer of 1660 when Eustace once more was able to make his way freely to Scotland. It had been a hard time for Marjorie. She had lost her mother five years before, and she had only heard a few times from Eustace, but the last letter had told her that he still treasured the knot she had given him in the Grange garden.

The young man on reaching the quiet house she had lived in so long, learned that Marjorie was in the garden, and stood waiting for her to come. All at once a radiant vision presented itself. Marjorie, grown to a beautiful girl, stood at the open door, pausing an instant to speak to some one, and then the long-parted friends were together once more.

Friends, did I say? Two months later saw them man and wife!



Being the true history of Bartholomew Portugues, a famous buccaneer who infested the West Indies in the seventeenth century.

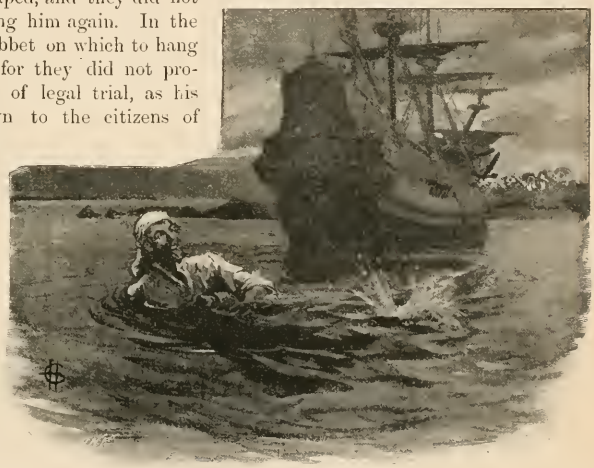
THE wild adventures of the buccaneers have been the theme of innumerable stories for boys, and successive generations of youngsters have read, with breathless interest, accounts of how the pirate ship, flying a signal of distress, approaches the unsuspecting treasure galleon, and, when close aboard, runs up the "Jolly Roger," fires a broadside, and finally takes the vessel by boarding. But if the buccaneer of fiction is a wonderful fellow, the buccaneer of fact was scarcely less wonderful.

Though invariably a great scoundrel, of course, we cannot but admire his dauntless courage, his hardihood, and even some of his questionable adventures. Take, for instance, the exploit of Bartholomew Portugues: it reads like a chapter from romance.

In a little vessel, carrying only four small guns, and with a crew of thirty men, Bartholomew set sail from Jamaica, and, when off the coast of Cuba, sighted a large Spanish ship bound for Havana. The Spaniard mounted twenty heavy guns and carried seventy men, but, in spite of this superiority, Bartholomew at once attacked her. The Spaniards, however, fought bravely and beat off the pirates, but inflicted so little loss upon them that Bartholomew decided to attack again, more vigorously than before, and he did this with such determination that, after a long and bloody fight, he, with his handful of men, overpowered the Spaniards and took possession of their ship. The pirates' loss amounted to ten killed and four wounded, but although thirty of the Spaniards had succumbed to the fierce attack of the pirates, they still outnumbered the latter by two to one. Disarming and securing his prisoners, Bartholomew then searched the vessel, and found that it contained 120,000 lbs. of cacao-nuts and 70,000 pieces of eight so, well pleased with his prize, he set sail for Cape St. Anthony, on the west coast of Cuba, the wind being adverse to their return to Jamaica.

But when they had almost reached St. Anthony, luck went against them, for three large Spanish ships hove in sight, and Bartholomew's lately-acquired vessel, having received some damage in the recent fight, was in no condition to run away, and, consequently, fell an easy prey to the Spaniards. The pirates were transferred to another vessel, which at once sailed off to Campeachy.

So Bartholomew Portugues, who, by a stroke of luck, had become possessed of a fine ship with a valuable cargo, now found himself a prisoner, with very little prospect of regaining his liberty, for some merchants of Campeachy, coming aboard the vessel on its arrival at that port, instantly recognised him as the most dreaded pirate in those seas, and quickly informed the authorities of his presence on board the ship. On the following morning the magistrates of the city sent an officer to take into custody all the prisoners with the exception of Bartholomew Portugues; him they deemed it safer to leave on board, for he had once before been a prisoner in Campeachy, and had escaped, and they did not wish to run the risk of losing him again. In the meanwhile, they erected a gibbet on which to hang him on the following day, for they did not propose to give him any form of legal trial, as his crimes were so well known to the citizens of Campeachy that they were unanimous in demanding his immediate execution.



WITH A JAR UNDER EACH ARM KEEPING HIM AFLOAT, BARTHOLOMEW SUCCEEDED IN REACHING THE SHORE.

The news of the end in store for him was brought to Bartholomew, and he immediately set about thinking of a way of escape. If only he could get ashore, he had little doubt of his being able to hide in the woods. But how was he to cross the strip of water which lay between him and the land he would give so much to reach? He could not get a boat without arousing his captors, and he was unable to swim. At last he hit upon a plan. Near to him stood two empty earthenware jars, of the kind used by the Spaniards for carrying wine to the West Indies, and he carefully stoppered the mouths of these, so that the water could not enter them, for he hoped that, with these jars to keep him afloat, he would be able to reach the shore. By good fortune he found a knife, which he concealed carefully, and, being thus prepared, he waited patiently for nightfall.

All on board the ship were asleep save Bartholomew and the sentry set to guard him, and, seeing that it was impossible to elude the man's vigilance, the pirate did not hesitate to stab him to the heart. The poor fellow died without a groan, and Bartholomew hastily and quietly scrambled down the ship's side into the sea, and, with a jar under each arm keeping him afloat, succeeded in reaching the shore. He at once ran to the shelter of the forest, and, finding a hollow tree, he climbed up to the top of the trunk and lowered himself into it. When morning came he saw, through a chink in the rotten wood, parties of Spaniards searching the forest for him, but they passed by his hiding-place unsuspectingly, and after hunting for him for three

COMING ALONGSIDE, THEY SUDDENLY SPRANG ABOARD, SLASHING RIGHT AND LEFT AMONG THE DISMAYED SPANIARDS.

days without success, they returned to the town. Seeing this, Bartholomew hastily quitted the tree, and set off through the forest in the direction of Golfo Triste, which lay some forty leagues distant from Campeachy. It was a long and perilous journey for a man to undertake alone and unarmed, but Bartholomew Portugues was a bold fellow in a desperate situation, and although he had no provisions with him, and only a small calabash of water, he preferred to run the risks of the journey rather than to fall again into the hands of the Spaniards. He suffered much from hunger, and also from thirst, for his little store of water was soon exhausted, but he sometimes found fruit and nuts, which served to keep life in his body.

It was nearly a fortnight ere he reached the sea, but even then his troubles were not at an end, for he had to walk many miles along a wild, uninhabited coast, and there was a river to be crossed. It was this river that was Bartholomew's greatest difficulty, and he had no empty wine jars to enable him to overcome his deficiency in the art of swimming. But he was not the man to give way to despair, and while turning over in his mind various plans for crossing the river, he saw, lying on the beach, a plank—a fragment of some lost ship—and driven through it were some large nails. He took these nails, and, grinding them against a stone, converted them into a queer-looking instrument which he proposed to use as a knife. With this clumsy tool he cut down some branches from the trees, and, joining them together with twigs and reeds which grew on the river bank, fashioned them into a raft. The little raft was a terribly cranky thing, but he managed to cross the river upon it, and was able to continue his journey.

At length he arrived at the Cape of Golfo Triste, where, to his great delight, he saw a pirate ship riding at anchor. The pirates turned out to be old comrades of his, and they listened sympathetically to the story of his capture, escape, and subsequent adventures.

It might be thought that, having twice been a prisoner in Campeachy, with death staring him in the face, Bartholomew Portugues would have no desire to return to that town, unless, indeed, he had with him so strong a force as to insure him against falling again into the power of the Spaniards. But it was not so. The same day on which he found himself safe among his comrades, he asked them to provide him with a boat and twenty men, and he vowed that, with

that small force, he would return to Campeachy and attack and capture the ship on which, but a fortnight since, he had lain a prisoner. The pirates willingly lent him the boat and the twenty men, and the little vessel started off towards Campeachy, where it arrived in eight days.

The ship still lay off the town, and the pirates, who were hugging the shore, turned the boat's head and rowed towards her. Those on board thought that it was a boat from shore, bearing contraband goods, and the pirates were able to approach without being suspected. Coming alongside, they suddenly sprang aboard, slashing right and left among the dismayed Spaniards, who soon surrendered. Quickly the pirates set sail on the ship, and steered for the open sea, fearing that some of the vessels lying off the town might discover them and recapture the vessel. But the luck was on Bartholomew's side this time; he got safely away from Campeachy, and found himself captain and owner of the identical vessel on which only three weeks before he had been lying a prisoner, with the imminent prospect of death before him.

Bartholomew set sail for Jamaica, but when sailing along off the southern coast of Cuba a tremendous storm arose, driving the ship before it on to the rocks known as the Jardines, where she split, and was swallowed by the waves.

The pirates escaped in a canoe, but never again did fortune smile upon Bartholomew Portugues. We cannot pity him, for he was a great scoundrel who plundered and murdered whenever and wherever he could, but we must at least admit that his hardihood, daring, and resourcefulness were qualities which, in an honourable cause, might have raised him to the topmost pinnacle of fame.

Overheard.

By Duncan McLaren.

I WAS on a cycling tour and having a really good time. Glorious weather, good roads and splendid health made my trip a fortnight to be remembered, I said to myself, as I reluctantly put together my clothes the last night preparatory to sending them home by carrier from the little wayside iun I had made my headquarters.

Everybody seemed sorry to see me go. All the villagers wished me good-morning hardly in their usual cheerful style, and the mothers openly said they wished I could have stayed a few days longer.

The fact was, I had become a centre of interest to them all, because little Jack Tenby had had a nasty fall just outside the inn and had cut his face about a good deal. He was promptly brought inside, and when in a few minutes I arrived after my day's cycling, half the village were consulting together as what was to be done.

Some were for taking him to the doctor nine miles away, but his mother was a widow and had a great struggle, as it was, to make both ends meet without adding a doctor's bill, so I, who had dabbled a bit for pure pleasure in the simpler forms of surgery, came forward and offered to sew the place up for the child.

Poor Mrs. Tenby was grateful indeed, and in a very short time Jackie was in my room away from the gaping crowd, and I put a couple of stitches in, and generally plastered him up. Then after he had revived a little, I carried him home and left him happily in bed.

This was all I had done, but the simple people, far removed from any town, considered me a wonderful young man, till I almost began to believe it myself!

Alas! pride comes before a fall.

I left the little village with great regret, and before night many miles lay between it and me. The twilight had fallen and it was getting dark, though the sky was a wonderful sight, and I knew the moon would soon be up, so I rode cheerfully, and—must I confess it?—somewhat carelessly on my way.

I suppose there was a brickbat on the road, I never discovered for certain, but I came over my handle-bars without an instant's warning. I suppose I must have been stunned slightly, for I lay like a log for some time, but at length I roused up and tried to discover my injuries. Face scraped, hands ditto, knees worse, and, to crown all, one of my ankles was sprained.

I found a little stream by the roadside and washed my hands and face and made myself as presentable as I could, and then slowly I wheeled my machine along, hoping for the sight of a house where I might perhaps take shelter for the night.

Presently along a narrow lane I caught sight of a light, evidently from a cottage, and I stumbled along as best I could towards it, but before I could get to the gate I was forced to lay my machine down and rest, the pain in my ankle was so intolerable.

Then I heard voices rising and falling close by, and I was on the point of calling to them to come to my help, when I caught the words, "We *can* do it to-night, safe enough; there's a big party at the doctor's, and they've all the plate out for it. I reckon we can bag the lot!" This was interesting, to say the least of it, and I dragged myself painfully as near the wooden fence as I could.

The talk went on steadily, so at last I ventured to peep over a bit of the fence, and saw two dark figures standing against a well-lighted window deep in conversation. One of them was evidently more nervous than the other, and he was doing his best to evade the job he saw before him, but at last he consented, and they made their plans.

As they talked I made mine. The doctor must be warned; but how? I could not tell where he lived, and yet it could not be very far, seeing that the men were planning the robbery for that very evening. I must make an effort, at any rate, to save the good man's plate if I could. Apparently the men never dreamed of any one being near, so I wheeled my machine on the grass as far as possible, and then with some difficulty I mounted and pedalled along with one foot as best I could. It was painful work, and I wondered when I should get to any human habitation again, and when I did whether it would be anywhere near the doctor's.

I was fortunate, as it turned out, for I met a farmer returning with a trap, and on asking him how far I was from a village he offered me a seat in his vehicle and found room for my machine too.

"Can you direct me to a doctor's?" I asked; "I want a really good one if I can."

"Why, yes, sir, about a mile along this road; I shall pass it quite close. He's a clever man, they say, and very rich; lives in a big house with fine grounds. By-the-by, there's big doings on to-night; his eldest son came of age to-day, and they've a grand party, I hear. I hope he will see you, though."

"That will be all right," I said. "Do you think you could wait a few minutes for me? I would willingly pay for your time if you would drive me on after to an hotel."

"Bless you, sir, I don't need that. I'll do it and only too pleased."

When we drove up to the brilliantly-lighted house, I managed to get down and hobble into the house, and after a short time the doctor came to me.

"Had a spill?" he asked genially, as he saw my dishevelled condition.

"Yes," I said, "but I wouldn't have troubled you on a night like this, but that my fall was the means of my overhearing a plan to rob you to-night."

Not a word would he hear till he had discovered the extent of my bruises, and then he called two or three of his friends in to listen to my tale.

"What a fine piece of fun, father," said the son and heir as he listened. "What shall we do?"

"I can send the police in," I said. "A farmer is kindly waiting to drive me on, and we can give information at once, and perhaps you will catch the men red-handed."

But though the farmer went to the police, I was not allowed to leave the house for several days. The good doctor insisted on my staying till my foot was better, and I had the satisfaction of seeing the would-be burglars caught in the act, and sentenced before I left that part of the world; and in no house do I receive a warmer welcome than the one I saved from being robbed that holiday.

The Eagle's Eggs.

IT is a wonderful thing, when you come to think of it, what a man will undergo in the pursuit of sport. Cold, hardship, loneliness, are all put up with for the sake of getting a few rare horns or a striped skin.

I myself have been bitten by the madness, and when I am cosily at home, sitting by my study fire, I look round and wonder what on earth ever could induce me to leave its comfort, and yet—well, I know that I should be willing to do it all again for the sake of the pleasure.

Africa and India have both had their share in contributing to my sport, but for downright discomfort give me Maral shooting in Asia Minor with Turks as companions. Just a year ago at Christmas time I was away there in the mountains with three Turks as helpers, and a funny experience I had. Firstly, the weather was bitter, and secondly, I did not know a word of Turkish, and my men were equally devoid of any knowledge of English.

Signs were our only communication. A more miserable three weeks than that I never spent.

I am quite aware I have only myself to blame, but I like the luxury of a grumble now and again, even if I am the one I grumble at.

Turks are queer people. They don't talk much, even among themselves; their cooking is detestable, and the very thought of the stews I had to live on makes me feel ill at this distance of time; but they proved patient in tracing the deer, keen-sighted beyond most, and, on the whole, I fared pretty well.

At any rate, I left Asia Minor with what I considered was a good bag of heads, and as that was what I went for, I ought to feel satisfied.

I was there several days before I ever caught sight of a Maral, far less attempt to shoot one, but every dog has his day, and mine came at last. We were tramping steadily through the snow when Mustapha stopped dead as if he had seen a ghost, and silently pointed to a faint mark on the snow.

Even the stolid faces of my men expressed grave satisfaction, and very cautiously we proceeded to trace the footprints. It was growing exciting, for I had never seen a Maral on his native hills, and very keen was my interest in the noble deer I was trying to bag.

Then before my astonished eyes I suddenly saw a beautiful sight. Two hinds and a magnificent stag bounded away from a thicket below, and I had the satisfaction of seeing a fine creature fall down a steep gulley at my first shot.

The change in the men was instantaneous. Off they bounded, eager to be first at the hill, and in a few minutes we were all standing by the dead animal. His horns were splendid; in fact, he was the best head I secured all the time I was in Asia Minor, and we cut him up with great delight.

Achmet and Mustapha did not care so much about the head, but they were keen on getting a good square meal, and before long we were busily cooking Maral steaks by our camp fire quite oblivious of the bitter wind and the icy cold which prevailed on the mountains.

It was some days before I had any fresh chances at the beautiful deer, whose heads I so coveted, and in the meantime I had another capture. One morning I had been scanning the mountain sides in vain with my telescope. No deer could I see, and I felt that the hours were slipping away, and I *did* want another head. However, my attention was attracted by a splendid golden eagle, which was flying in and out of what appeared to be an inaccessible crevice in the rocks some distance away. The bird was a splendid specimen, and I resolved to bag it if I could. Evidently there was a nest in the rocks, and I thought it would be nice to get the eggs too.

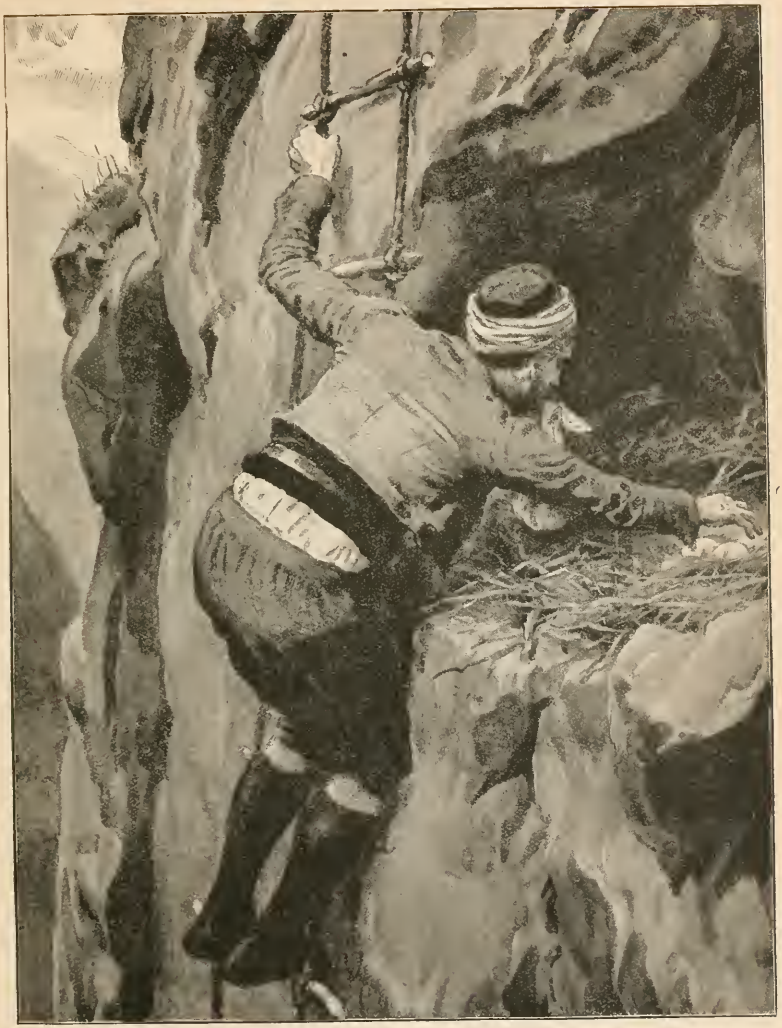
I managed to make Mustapha understand at last what it was I wanted to do, and his face was a picture. Maral, he could quite feel was a sport worthy of the name, but that eagle! However, he preceded me to a thicket nearer the nest, and in a short time I had secured the beautiful bird. So far so good; but the eggs were quite another matter, and the more difficult the matter seemed, the more did my mind determine to get them somehow or other.

The rock was at least one hundred and fifty feet high, and went sheer to the ground where we stood, with only a few ledges, on the largest of which the nest was placed. No chance of climbing that bare scarped face to get the eggs, so we reconnoitred the position, and found it was possible to scale the cliff from the other side, lower a rope and get the eggs that way.

Achmet and Mustapha soon saw what I wanted to do, and we walked back to the camp with the dead bird, ransacked our stores for rope, and then for a long time we were busily engaged in constructing a ladder with it.

Mustapha volunteered to descend it when done, and I supplied him with a strong handkerchief to carry his spoils in, and he finally secured the eggs quite safely.

How he was puzzled! What could possess this mad Englishman to waste two good eggs by pouring their contents on the ground and keeping the shells? Truly an Englishman is a mystery to an Eastern mind; Mustapha had never seen a museum, and I preferred my next meal to be without the addition of eagle's eggs.



MUSTAPHA FINALLY SECURED THE EGGS.

Ayesha's Pilgrimage.

AYESHA was supremely happy. She was young, good-looking, and devoted to her husband, who was equally devoted to her. Added to this was the knowledge that they were both going to start on a pilgrimage to the holy river to wash away their sins as quickly as possible, and what was wanting to make life happier than it already was? Ayesha did not know, indeed she would have answered "Nothing," had she been asked.

They were to travel in comfort over the many miles that lay between them and the sacred river. Rama, her husband, was a wealthy man, so they were not obliged to tramp all the way on foot, but a fine elephant bore the young wife, while her husband rode his magnificent Arab horse. But one day a new experience awaited them. They were only a few days' journey from the Ganges, and the roads were full of people eagerly pressing towards the goal. All sorts of pilgrims were there, rich and poor, strong and weak, and Ayesha gazed at them with much interest. At one spot, however, all progress was barred by the immense throng pouring along, and as the elephant came to a standstill, Ayesha caught the sound of singing. The words floated across to her and fascinated her. What did it mean? Over and over again came the words in Hindustani, "What can wash away my sin?" a question ever present to all in the vast multitude, who were anxious to wash it away in the Ganges. But this was not what the answer was.

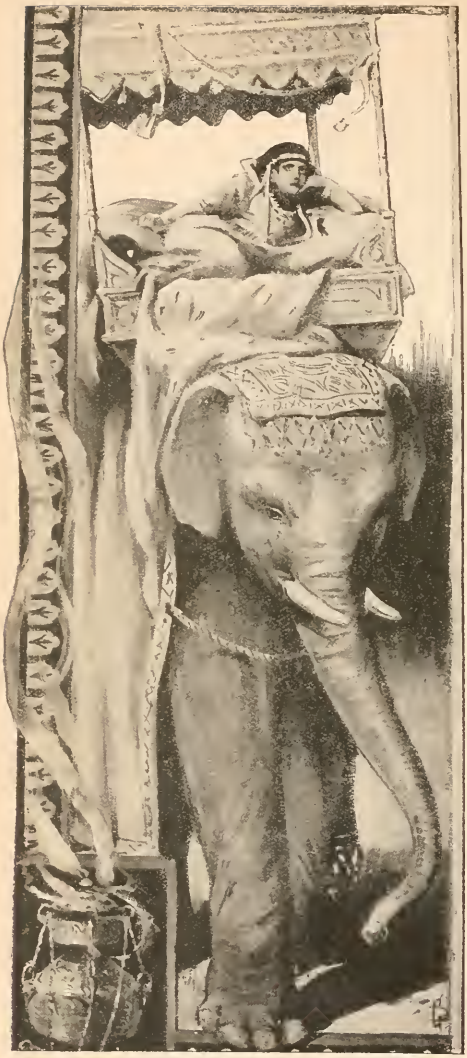
"Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

Then the singing ceased and Ayesha could hear a man's voice speaking, but what he said she could not catch. At that moment the elephant moved on and she had no chance to hear more of either speaking or singing. Still the words rang in her ears, "What can wash away my sin?" and for the first time in her life Ayesha began to think seriously.

When the Ganges was reached she, like the thousands of others, went down into the water and washed, but when she came up again the haunting question returned in full force.

The next day she was sitting in the tent waiting for her husband's return from the Holy City, whither he had gone to transact some business, when she suddenly caught the sound of singing again. Hastily calling her old nurse, who had accompanied her from home, the two women set out, closely veiled, for the tree where a crowd of pilgrims had gathered.

AYESHA WENT TO THE DOOR, AND HELD UP HER LIGHT.—p. 109.



It was the same hymn, and then the singer began to speak, telling them that there was no other way to escape the penalties of sin except being washed in the precious blood of Jesus.

Ayesha listened spellbound. Such a story she had never heard before, as the speaker went on to tell of Christ's love in dying for His enemies. When he ceased she returned to the tent, but an English lady had put a little book in her hand as she turned away.

Ayesha had something to think about indeed. As the elephant slowly made its way home again when the pilgrimage was over she had time to read her precious little book, and as the wondrous love became clearer to her from the Gospel of Luke which had come into her hands, her whole heart went out to the Saviour who had given Himself for her.

Ayesha soon felt she must tell her husband the wonderful news, but, to her surprise, was met with bitter scorn and angry words, and the order to give up this folly at once. He seized her precious Gospel and left her frightened and weeping. Day after day passed by, and her misery grew greater. Give up her faith she could not, and would not, whatever befell her, and she suffered much. Blows, hard treatment, and bad food soon reduced the bright girl to a mere shadow, and it seemed as if her husband's love had turned to hatred. Then he ordered her to prepare for a journey, and she meekly obeyed. Her husband rode his Arab, but no elephant was provided for her. She walked all the distance, until they reached a tiny hut in the middle of the jungle, which proved to be their destination.

In this dismal spot she was left for several weeks utterly alone, trembling at night when the deep, angry roars told that the tigers were afoot. But still Ayesha's heart was brave, for she had the presence and comfort of her Saviour's love, and she waited in peace.

One night very late she was aroused by a footstep outside; then came a rush and a groan. Then silence.

The terrified woman, feeling sure that something was wrong, went to the door and held up her light. As its rays fell on the verandah she discovered that her own husband lay almost at her feet, while an enormous tiger was crouching on the other side of his unconscious victim, snarling at the light.

Ayesha's resolve was quickly taken. She quietly closed the door, and setting the lamp down, she searched for a small dagger which constituted her only weapon, and then with a prayer on her lips she stepped out and stabbed the astonished tiger in the eye, to fall a second later a victim to the enraged beast.

When Rama recovered consciousness it was full daylight, and he found his dead wife lying across his feet, fearfully mangled; and he then realized that she had given her life for his.

Late that afternoon Rama's servants arrived at the hut to find their master completely prostrated with the shock and his grief. For many weeks he lay ill, but it was a time of heart-searching as well. Rama knew well that of late his wife had little cause to love him, and yet she had saved his life at the expense of her own. Then his thoughts turned to her treasured little book, and with an effort he dragged himself to the place where he had hidden it away. From that hour it never left him, and ere long the news of the Gospel reached his heart also as it had done in Ayesha's case. Truly her pilgrimage had not been in vain, for Rama gave up his business, and finally became a native preacher among his own people.

By Arthur King.

A SULTRY day at the end of August 1651 was drawing to a close, and the shadows were lengthening through the leafy lanes of Warwickshire.

It was seven o'clock, and, save for the cawing of rooks and the ripple of the brook which bordered the white road, no sound came to the ears of the boy who was making his way steadily towards the west.

Dressed in black velvet, with a broad sash of yellow silk around his waist and a plumed hat upon his fair curls, he walked as though some purpose other than a boy's aimless rambling were animating him.

Suddenly he stopped, and, lifting his head, appeared to listen, and as he did so the distant beat of horses' hoofs became audible, and, rapidly increasing in volume, betokened the approach of a large company of mounted men.

At intervals snatches of song were borne upon the evening air, and soon the words themselves could be fitfully distinguished: "The Lord of Hosts, the Lord of Hosts," and then, "Who giveth us the victory."

"'Tis a party of Roundhead soldiers," said the lad, "and they are coming into this road round Ashdown Hill."

For a moment he paused irresolutely, and then stepped on again, his eyes full of excitement and defiance.

Ere he had traversed another furlong the leaders of a troop of cavalry, the sinking sun glinting on their corselets and morions, circled into the road almost at his side.

"Ha! seest thou, Dalton?" cried a harsh voice. "A young Cavalier, forsooth; and mark how he strides along. Even the spawn of these Malignants ape their accursed forbears."

"Yet 'tis a pretty lad, Holmes," replied the officer addressed, reining in his horse, "and, as I think, one not like to work us overmuch injury. How sayest thou, Sir Cavalier?" he continued banteringly to the boy, who had stopped, and was becoming the centre of an increasing crowd of soldiers. "Have we your permission to proceed this way? We trust so, for we are somewhat spent with travel, and would avoid, if possible, any serious conflict ere nightfall."

There was a guffaw from the troopers at this pleasantry, and Captain Dalton proceeded: "Having business presently at Worcester with the young man, Charles Stuart, we have been compelled to pass through this charming neighbourhood, but we should be loath to think that our doing so has caused you any displeasure."

"If," replied the boy fearlessly, "there were but a handful of His Majesty King Charles the Second's faithful soldiers here, they would give you some sharper work to do than mocking a defenceless boy; but perhaps you are wise to amuse yourselves *before* you get to Worcester. I'll warrant your time for jesting will be short eno' then."

"Young imp of Satan!" growled Holmes. "Had I my way thou shouldst swing from yonder oak for crows to peck at those bright eyes of thine. What saith the Scripture? 'Thou shalt utterly destroy them, root and branch.'"

"Hold thy peace, Captain Holmes," exclaimed a stern voice behind him. "Thou art overmuch given to austerity. Take five men and ride thirty yards in advance; the rest will follow me at a like distance. Boy, ride by my side."

A trooper brought up a spare charger, and, after he had helped the young Royalist into the saddle, the cavalcade proceeded, the boy on the massive war-horse now and again stealing a sidelong glance at his grim companion, who rode in gloomy silence for awhile.

"AYE," REPLIED DICK SIMPLY, "YOU ARE OLIVER CROMWELL. I KNEW YOU AT ONCE—BY YOUR PORTRAIT, WHICH HANGS AT HOME."—p. 112.

Turning at length, he said abruptly: "How do we find thee wandering here? The night is falling, armed men are abroad, and thou hast not many years, methinks?"

"I am eleven," replied the boy quickly, "and shall be twelve ere Yule."

Then, as his face clouded over, he went on: "My mother lies grievous sick at home; they fear she may not live, and I came this way thinking to meet my brother, who has been summoned from Worcester to receive her last commands should she not get well again. I could not stay within doors," he added mournfully; "all is so sad there now."

"From Worcester, dost thou say? Then thy brother is perchance a soldier?"

"One of the King's most trusted captains, though the youngest of them all," was the answer, with a proud smile.

"So? And what is thy name?"

"My name is Dick Leigh, of Leigh Manor."

"And thy father?"

"Was Sir Rupert Leigh. He died a year agone; he had been ill a long, long time"—and the young lips quivered for a moment. "He was shot in the throat when fighting the rebels at Preston."

"'The rebels!' Thou art bold, young Richard. Know you to whom you speak?"

"Aye," replied Dick simply, "you are Oliver Cromwell. I knew you at once——" He was on the point of saying "by your wart"; but young Leigh was a gentleman all through, and, remembering in time that perhaps General Cromwell was not particularly proud of that facial peculiarity, he substituted, "by your portrait, which hangs at home."

"*My* portrait in the house of a Royalist?" said Cromwell, smiling grimly. "That is an unusual honour indeed. Can you explain it?"

"I have heard my father say that he admired your courage, and your military genius, and he used to show us your portrait to remind us of the value of perseverance and ability, but after King Charles the First——"

"Well," said Cromwell shortly, with a side glance at the boy, "go on."

"After King Charles—died," said Dick, "my father had some words written beneath your picture, and turned it to the wall."

"What were the words, boy?"

"'This is the head of a traitor, who might have been a patriot,'" blurted out Dick, with all the recklessness of youth.

For a moment the General's stern, impassive face was broken up into waves of emotion, as when a breeze stirs the placid surface of a lake, and makes it dark and gloomy.

He bit his lip fiercely, and, turning in the saddle, glared savagely at Dick, crying, "Unjust, unjust!"

Then, resuming his position, he muttered, "Bah! 'Tis but a child who babbles what his prating sire has taught him."

Holmes and his men were now nearing a sharp bend in the road, and when some fifty yards still separated them from the corner the sound of a horse approaching at full gallop was heard, and in another instant there came riding furiously towards them a horseman, whose apparel proclaimed him to be an officer attached to the Royalist forces. Perceiving the oncoming cavalry too late to change his course he drew his sword, and, with what seemed the fury of despair, came charging down upon the nearest trooper. For a moment the two were locked together; then with a rattle and clang the Roundhead swayed heavily from his saddle on to the road, sending up a cloud of white dust in his fall.

Brief as the time had been, Cromwell had noticed the small hands beside him tighten on the rein they held, had seen the sparkle in the blue eyes, and heard the cry of "Bravely struck, Ralph! Oh, Ralph, how he went down."

More was not needed to tell the General that this fiery Cavalier was his young companion's brother, and, rising in his stirrups, he shouted lustily, "Take him alive and harm him not!"

The order came in time to save the Royalist from being cut down, but not before Holmes had joyously run him through the sword arm, near the shoulder, ere he could recover from the impact with the fallen trooper.

Cromwell, whose blood was always warmed by any deed of bravery or conflict, galloped quickly up to the group and said, with a smile, "Captain Leigh! though a valiant, thou art scarce a wise man, methinks; 'tis not oft a single swordsman is bold or mad enough to charge a whole troop of my cavalry."

"The business I am about brooks no delay, General," replied the Royalist, with a look of

surprise at being addressed by name, which deepened into amazement as he recognised the boy who rode by Cromwell's side.

"Ha! What thinkest thou of the latest recruit to my ranks?" cried Cromwell, noting his bewilderment. "Shall he not some day make a lusty swordsman?"

"He rides not in arms, I see, General; nor will he ever against his King," replied the young soldier simply, his eyes resting fondly on the boy's flushed face.

"Humph! Now, two of you, pick up that man; there is life in him yet, is there not?"

"Yes, General; he is but stunned."

"Strap him to his horse, then, and follow with him slowly. We camp on this side of yonder slope, Captain Leigh; when we dismount thy wounded arm shall have attention."

"Tut, General! I thank thee for thy courtesy, but it is no more than a scratch."

"Nevertheless," said Cromwell, looking keenly at him, "it shall be bound; my men do not play at needlework when their swords are drawn."

And, indeed, the young Royalist's pallid face and the broadening stain upon his sleeve belied his words, for the thrust had been a shrewd one, and Ralph Leigh well knew that his right arm would be useless for a time.

At a brisk trot the company proceeded, and, sweeping up the slight incline, they dismounted near its summit, and the camp was speedily formed.

When all was in order Ralph was brought before the general to be questioned as a prisoner of war, while his young brother was placed by his side.

"Now, Captain Leigh," began Cromwell, "thou hast business which permits of no delay. What is the nature of this business?"

WITH A RATTLE AND CLANG THE ROUNDHEAD SWAYED HEAVILY FROM HIS SADDLE ON TO THE ROAD.

"It is of a private nature."

"If that is to be my sole answer thy burial will resemble thy business, and will be completed more expeditiously," said Cromwell bluntly.

"Oh, Ralph," broke in the boy, "I told the general you were coming to see our mother, who——"

"Then," interrupted Ralph, "the general knows my business, and if he will not believe your words neither will he mine."

"Why should I credit this tale of thy sick mother?" said Cromwell sternly. "Perchance thou bearest dispatches, or a message of import to be transmitted by thy young brother here, who, by virtue of his tender years, would pass unchallenged. Nay, nay, such things have chanced ere now. Why not again?"

"And stood the matter so," replied Captain Leigh with equal sternness, "thinkest thou that even torture could open my mouth? The army of the King, though

"BIND THEM SECURELY, AND BRING THEM BEFORE ME AT SUNRISE," SAID CROMWELL.

less large than thine, contains no *traitors*, General Cromwell."

"*Twice* within the hour," exclaimed Cromwell furiously. "Oh, bethink thee, sir, bethink thee! Art thou wise to brave me thus? By all the laws of warfare thy life is mine to deal with as I choose. I find thee riding hot-foot from a hostile camp, intent upon some errand whose nature thou wilt not divulge; thou fallest unprovoked upon my troopers, and one of them thou hast all but killed."

"Would that it had been quite, and two instead of one," replied Leigh haughtily. "'Twas done in open combat, and they were six to one."

"Enough! Bind them securely, and bring them before me at sunrise," said Cromwell. "If the Malignant will not then disclose the true purport of his journey he shall die."

"Stay but a moment," cried the elder Leigh, as they were being taken from Cromwell's presence. "For myself I ask nothing, but I pray thee to set my brother free. Men wage not war with children, and should his mother learn his absence——"

"It runs not with my humour to let him go at present," briefly responded Cromwell, turning his back upon the prisoners, who were immediately hurried away.

* * * * * * *

Three hours later the Roundheads' camp was silent, and the young moon shone white upon the upturned faces of Cromwell's soldiers, sleeping soundly after their long march, yet not so soundly as many of them were destined to sleep within the week around the walls of Worcester.

A few sentries were posted to guard against surprise, but these knew that their duty was, for at least this night, more or less a sinecure, since the position of the Royalists was accurately known, and there was scant reason to anticipate an attack.

The trooper who had been told off to guard the Leighs had seated himself with his back to a huge oak, and with one eye on the prisoners and the other on the fire before him, had manfully endeavoured to keep himself awake, but, gradually yielding to the general sense of security and his own fatigue, the influence of the night had overcome him and he was sinking into slumber, starting now and again to glance at the two brothers, until at last, murmuring, "A wounded Malignant and a child, both fast asleep—small need to watch them," he closed his eyes, and a minute later his regular breathing proclaimed that he was unconscious of all around him.

At the same instant a burly soldier wrapped in a long cloak came noiselessly into the shadow of a neighbouring tree and fixed his gaze on the sleeping brothers.

But were they sleeping?

Truly the elder was, with a soldier's calm indifference to the morrow, and nothing but an occasional twitch of the lip, or a passing frown, showed that his dreams were troubled; but the eyes of the younger, whose head was pillowed on his brother's uninjured arm, reflected the glow of the dying fire, and from his lips there came the whisper, "At last the soldier sleeps. They shall not kill my brother now; they *shall* not kill him now."

"Nor shall they, Master Richard, nor shall they, but how canst *thou* prevent it, boy?" said the watcher softly to himself.

As he spoke Dick raised his head, and began to roll slowly towards the fire. His hands were tied behind him, and when he reached the edge of the ring of flame, he looked over his shoulder, and, choosing a small branch which was glowing brightly, he placed his wrists firmly upon it.

"So, so! He would burn his bonds," whispered Cromwell, for he it was who watched unseen.

Dick was now beginning to feel the scorch of the flames upon his flesh. His tunic had been removed and thrown over him for warmth, and his arms were bare to the elbows, but not for a moment did he flinch, only increasing his efforts as he felt the cords becoming slacker. "He will be scarred," muttered Cromwell anxiously, as he watched the white arms ploughing deeply into the embers.

CROMWELL DREW A PISTOL FROM HIS BELT, AND LEVELLED IT, NOT AT DICK, BUT AT HIS OWN SOLDIER.

"Yet, what of that? They will be scars of which he may well be proud, and 'tis in this fashion *men* are made."

And now the general drew a pistol from his belt, and slowly raising it, levelled it, not at the writhing Dick, nor at Dick's sleeping brother, but at his own soldier, who lay just beyond the light of the fire, for the fear had fallen on him that the man might suddenly awake, and, finding the boy on the point of escape, might kill him before he could prevent it.

And still Dick struggled silently with his smouldering bonds, keeping his gaze fixed upon the sleeping soldier, until at length the agony of the burning strands forced a stifled groan from his white lips.

The cry of anguish, suppressed though it was, made glistening beads stand out upon the iron general's brow, but still he *would* not interfere; the boy should conquer by himself. He would not rob him of his victory, not now that he had borne so much; *not now that he was free!* For as he watched he saw the last piece of glowing rope fall asunder, and Dick's hands were his own once more.

The boy sat upright with a shuddering gasp.

"It hurt me," he said ruefully; "it hurt me a little more than I thought it would even, and, oh, how my arms are scorched!

"Ralph must not see them now," he went on with a low laugh, "or I know he will want to stay and kill some one for it."

Rapidly rolling down his shirt-sleeves, he bent forward and quickly unfastened the thongs which bound his ankles.

Then, slipping on his tunic, he crept to his brother's side, and, placing one hand upon his forehead, called softly, "Ralph!"

"Why, Dick, boy," said Ralph Leigh, waking quickly, "what are you doing here? Ah, I remember now. We are prisoners."

"Hush! Speak low, Ralph, the guard is fast asleep, and we can escape if we are quiet. See! I can untie all your bonds."

"But the knaves had bound you also. How comes it you are free?"

"They had not tied me very tight, Ralph, and I wriggled myself loose; but quick, your horse is here by this tree! Mount and away!"

"Flight, Dick? I like not that," said Captain Leigh, rising to his feet as the last knot which had secured him yielded to his brother's eager fingers. "And yet, they had bound us," he continued, frowning, "and I am not on my parole. Yes; come, Dickie; thanks to you, we will escape them. Steady, Prince, good nag, stand quiet, then: quiet, I say! But can I mount, I wonder? My right arm hangs stiff and helpless by my side."

"Yes, yes," said the boy feverishly, "you must mount the wrong side for once. See! your left arm over Prince's withers, so; now give me your right leg and you can scramble into the saddle."

Ralph could not see, or guess of, the awful pain in his brother's face as his weight fell on the boy's blistered arms, but Cromwell saw it, and the hardened warrior shivered as he looked, and dug his heavy heel into the ground to keep himself from breaking silence.

One more moment of agony, and Dick was seated behind his brother, clasping his belt; then, as Ralph touched his horse with the spurs, they bounded away; but in the sudden start one of the charger's hind hoofs tore up a piece of turf, which, flying in the air, fell full upon the sleeping trooper's face.

With an imprecation the soldier sprang up instantly, wide awake, and, seizing his musket, he was levelling it at the fugitives when it was struck sharply upwards, and a voice, which, despite its unwonted tremor, he recognised as his general's, cried, "Stay thy hand—on thy life stay thy hand! Dost thou not see that the little lad rides behind his brother? I would not have that gallant boy's young blood upon my soul, so stay thy hand!"

* * * * * * *

"And, Fletcher," continued Cromwell, when the last hoof-beats of the horse which bore the brothers homeward had died away, "thou hast slept upon thy post; for one other such breach of duty I will have thee shot. See thou to it!"

Trapped in a Derelict.

By W. C. Metcalfe,

Author of 'Undaunted,' 'Honours Divided,' etc.

CHAPTER I

THE DERELICT

"VESSEL right ahead, sir!" came the cry from the forecastle-head of the British ship *Neptune* one afternoon in the month of March, as the good ship was speeding on her homeward voyage across the Atlantic.

"Aye, aye!" came the gruff but hearty response from the chief officer who was then on watch. "Here, Jawkins!" to an apprentice who was patrolling the lee side of the poop-deck, "run down quickly into my cabin and bring my glasses up!"

The boy immediately vanished down the companion, and in another minute or so placed the binoculars in the officer's hands. Mr. Harding, for that was the officer's name, strode for'ard to the fore end of the poop on the weather side, and raising the glasses to his eyes peered long and steadily at the object ahead.

"Here, Jawkins," he said to the youth who was standing near, "you have good sight, just tell me what you make of that craft ahead!" and he handed the glasses to him. Jawkins, a fine, strapping youth of eighteen, took the glasses and looked steadily through them.

"Why, it's a vessel, sir, with only her lower-masts standing, and she is flying a signal of distress."

"I thought as much," said Mr. Harding, "I thought I saw a reversed ensign flying from her mizzen. Run down quickly, my lad, and tell Captain Baines that there is a vessel ahead flying a distress signal and close to!"

The youth flew down the companion and reported to the captain, as he was told.

"A vessel, eh? And flying a distress signal, too, eh?" said Captain Baines.

"Yes, sir, and close to," said Jawkins.

"Tell Mr. Harding to heave the ship to

about a quarter of a mile to windward and get a boat cleared away; he had better call 'all hands' as the weather is a bit rough. I'll be on deck directly."

"All hands on deck!" roared the chief officer as soon as the message had been delivered to him. "Lay aft the watch and clear away the port quarter boat! Now, my lads, look alive!"

In a moment the decks presented a scene of bustling activity, for the news had quickly spread that there was a vessel in distress, close to, and the men flew to execute the orders given to them. Captain Baines, a smart active seaman, was on deck before the ship was brought to the wind.

"She's a derelict, I'm thinking," he said to his chief officer, "and I do not suppose there is a living soul aboard of her; I can't see a sign of life anywhere about her decks. However, I think it will be wise to board her in case there should be any one below in her cabins. She's timber-laden, I see, and water-logged, to judge by the way she is rolling." Then raising his voice, "I want six volunteers for the boat to board that ship; now who is willing to go?"

Every man held up his hand.

"Choose six of the stoutest men, Mr. Harding, and take them with you to the ship, and be very careful how you get aboard. Make a thorough good search of the vessel, and if you can find her log-book and papers, bring them back with you; try and get back before it becomes dark."

"If you please, sir," said Jawkins, touching his cap respectfully to the captain, "will you allow Humphreys and myself to accompany Mr. Harding?"

"Certainly," said the captain without any hesitation, "if Mr. Harding has no objection, I have none."

"I have no objection, sir," said the chief officer.

When the *Neptune* was about a quarter of a mile to windward of the distressed vessel she was hove to, the boat lowered safely into the water, and its crew pulling vigorously in the direction of the derelict.

"Do you think it possible there might be some living soul aboard, sir?" asked Jawkins when about half the distance had been traversed.

"It is possible there might be some poor wretches below," replied Mr. Harding; "we shall find out shortly if we can get aboard safely."

As they approached nearer they were much struck with the pitiful and forlorn spectacle presented to their gaze. The ship, water-logged as they soon discovered, lay rolling helplessly and heavily to and fro, at times to so great an extent as to place her covering boards completely under water. Her lower-masts only were standing, her boom snapped off at the cap, and a quantity of the head-gear trailing over the bows. As she lay thus with the seas now and again pouring over her decks as they would over a raft, and with the water from her scuppers streaming down her side as though weeping tears of sorrow over her hopeless condition, and with the green grass and slimy weed showing itself just above the copper line every time she rolled, she presented a picture which did not fail to elicit many pathetic expressions from the men as they gazed at her.

"Poor old gal," said one, "it do seem a bit 'ard she should come to this, don't it?"

"Don't she look sad?" said another. "To my mind she looks like a poor horphan with no one to care for 'er."

"Or a poor relashun," interposed a third.

"Way enough, men," said Mr. Harding, who was feeling greatly amused at the men's remarks. "Now be as careful as you can. One of you had better get aboard first and see if there is such a thing as a rope-ladder, and if so, lower it over the side and throw a line to us."

"I'll go, sir," volunteered Jawkins; "let me go, sir!" Mr. Harding assented.

It was a task fraught with no little danger to take the boat alongside a heavily-rolling ship where there was imminent risk of her being sucked down or smashed to pieces, and it was only

after repeated trials that she was taken close enough in for Jawkins to seize hold of the main chains and scramble aboard. In a little time he appeared again, and threw a rope-ladder over the side in the waist of the ship clear of the chains.

"Now, men, look out again and get her in close enough for me to get hold of that ladder; Humphreys, you can follow me!"

Watching his opportunity, the mate sprang for the ladder and was soon on deck with Jawkins; the lad Humphreys followed.

"Now keep off from the ship!" shouted Mr. Harding, addressing the crew of the boat, "I'll call you when I want you."

CHAPTER II

A NARROW ESCAPE

THE mate, followed by his two young companions, entered the cabin. It was large and plainly but comfortably furnished with one long table with seats and a settee on each side under the large square port. It was evident from the number of cabins on either side that the vessel had been formerly used in the passenger trade. Mr. Harding made immediately for the captain's cabin, a large one in the stern, and instituted a search for the ship's papers and log-books. But not a vestige of them was to be seen anywhere, nor was there any sign of a chronometer or sextant, all had evidently been taken away by those who had abandoned the vessel. They found, however, several charts and sailing directories, besides other books of a non-nautical character, and various knick-knacks usually to be found in the cabin of a ship. They next went upon the poop-deck and noted that every boat was gone from the davits and skids, and that even the longboat had been removed from the deck-house, a fact which went some way to prove that the ship had not been hurriedly abandoned. Upon each bucket in the rack across the fore end of the poop they read the name *Gladiator*. Thus for the first time they were made acquainted with the name of the ship, for no name was painted on the bows and they had not gone under her stern to approach the vessel whilst in the boat. Mr. Harding next proposed that they should go down into the lazarette or store-room and examine the stores, so descending the companion again they unlocked the padlock which fastened the hatch, the key being left in it, and having lighted a piece of candle which they found in the cabin, went down the ladder. Stores in abundance were found, the ship had been well victualled, there was plenty of everything needful for a long voyage. A keg of salted salmon having taken the fancy of Mr. Harding, he suggested that they should take it back with them to the ship. Jawkins immediately seized the keg, and placing it on his broad shoulders proceeded to ascend the ladder. Scarcely, however, had he mounted two rungs when to their surprise, and no less their dismay, the hatch was violently slammed down and the key hurriedly turned in the lock. Mr. Harding and the two lads stared at one another in mute surprise.

"Trapped!" exclaimed the former. "Who in the name of wonders has done this? We must get out somehow. Hi there! open the hatch at once!"

A loud derisive laugh was the only response.

"Open the hatch, I say!" again shouted Mr. Harding, but no other notice of this request was taken save another mocking laugh.

"Let us try and burst it open, sir," proposed Humphreys; "there's a capstan-bar here, and I think a good pounding on the hatch with it might burst it open."

"Capital!" agreed Mr. Harding, taking the bar from the youth; "I'll have a go at it first." So saying he ascended a few rungs of the ladder and dealt the hatch some terrible blows. The mate was a powerful man and his blows were delivered with much force and energy, but after persistent efforts for at least ten minutes he was fain to desist without the satisfaction of having

achieved his purpose. Jawkins next took the bar and prodded away most pertinaciously for another ten minutes but with no better result. Then Humphreys followed suit, but was not one whit more successful.

"It's a bad job," said Mr. Harding. "I'm afraid that hatch is too strong for us; however, I'll have another try." And he did so, but with no better luck.

"Bring your light here, Jawkins, and let us see if we can get through the door into the 'tween-decks." Jawkins did so, but all attempts to open the door were as unsuccessful as those made on the hatch. What was to be done? They were in a nice predicament indeed. It would be now dark, they reckoned, and Captain Baines would be in a terrible state of anxiety concerning them. A happy idea suggested itself to Jawkins.

"Why not open the scuttle, sir, and holler out of it to our boat's crew and tell them how we are situated?"

"Bravo, Jawkins! Capital!" said the mate, and immediately set to work to unscrew the deadlight. This after some difficulty was accomplished, and then the round glass window was opened. The wind instantly rushed in with a strong gust and the candle held by Jawkins was extinguished. Mr. Harding, putting his head as far through the round port as he was able, shouted loudly—

"Boat ah-o-o-o-y! Ah-o-o-y there! Come aboard quickly!" But no answer save the buzzing rushing sound of the wind reached his ears.

"The wind is freshening fast," he said, withdrawing his head; "the night is as dark as pitch, and I can hear nothing in reply to my hailing."

Jawkins next exercised his vocal powers, but with no better result. Humphreys then followed, but after the most strenuous efforts withdrew his head, remarking that he could hear nothing and that he thought the boat must have gone. That the wind had increased was evidenced a few minutes afterwards in a most unpleasant manner by a sea striking the ship and pouring a lot of its contents through the scuttle, necessitating its being immediately closed. They next opened the opposite round port, deeming it probable that the boat might be waiting off on that side. But all their hailing was in vain; not a sound save the hum of the freshening breeze and the lapping of the water against the ship's side could be heard. They went to the hatch again and pounded at it vigorously but with no better result than before. Perplexed and thoroughly disheartened they stood at the foot of the ladder looking into one another's faces by the pale light of the candle, unable to devise any means of escape whatsoever.

"Hold the light against the port!" suggested Mr. Harding after a long pause; "if the boat is any way near it will be seen." This was done, Jawkins taking his stand first before one port, then before another for several minutes at each until the candle was burned entirely away and they were all left in darkness. For the third time they exhausted their strength, and all to no purpose, by pounding at the hatch with the capstan-bar. Then despairingly they sat down, completely at a loss to know what was best to be done. A knock at the hatch above arrested their thoughts.

"Who's there?" shouted Mr. Harding.

"Roast, you wretches. Ha, ha!" came the voice. "I'll make it hot for you I will. Burn, frizzle and crack! Ha! ha! I'll get my revenge now, I'll——"

"Good heavens!" interrupted Mr. Harding in excited tones, "he's set fire to the ship, I smell the burning. Hi!" raising his voice, "let us out, man, quickly!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came the derisive reply. "Let you out indeed! Not yet, my fine fellows, not till the fire roars and roars and roars and——"

"For mercy's sake, man alive, let us out!" implored Mr. Harding, but the man had evidently left the hatch, for no answer was returned. The agonising suspense endured by Mr. Harding and his two young companions can be better imagined than described. Their doom seemed sealed;

THE SHIP LAY ROLLING HELPLESSLY TO AND FRO.—p. 118.

not a hope had they of being rescued unless through the instrumentality of their shipmates, and even this hope seemed wretchedly meagre when the conviction that owing to the stormy weather the boat would possibly be unable to get alongside would assert itself. Oh, those agonising minutes as they stood under the hatch listening to the crackling of the fire and wondering when they should feel its terrible heat! What could their boat have been doing all this time? Why could they not have boarded the vessel and ascertained what had kept them so long? Ha! what was this? A loud knocking at the hatch above, and a man's voice—

"Below there, my hearties! Come out and roast or drown, whichever you prefer, come on!" The lock was turned and the hatch thrown back.

Mr. Harding and his two young companions rushed hurriedly up the ladder and then on to the deck. Flames had already encircled the fore and main lower-masts and were bursting out of the hatches, casting a wild lurid light over the dark and stormy waste of waters.

"Look!" shouted the wild shrill voice of a dark figure standing on the poop-rail, "I've done my work, I leave you to your fate. Good-bye!" and before they could seize him the miserable wretch had flung himself headlong into the sea.

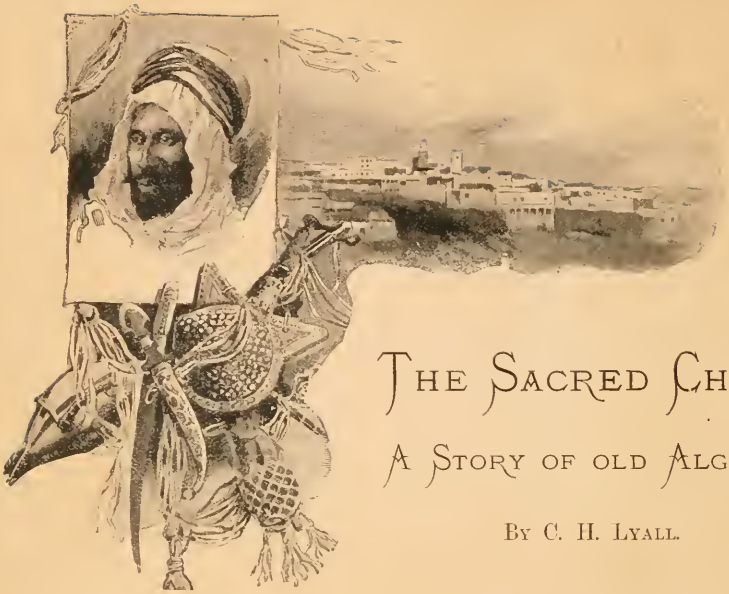
"Ah-o-o-oy! ah-o-o-oy! On deck there!" came a deep hearty voice which they immediately recognised as belonging to the second officer of the *Neptune*. "Throw yourselves over the stern, we're coming under the counter and will pick you up!"

"Come on, my lads," said Mr. Harding, and in a moment all three were standing on the taffrail.

"Jump!" said the deep voice from the boat, and all three plunged instantly into the dark waters and were picked up safely by the brave fellows in the boat.

* * * * * * *

"Just in time, Mr. Harding," said Captain Baines, shaking his chief by the hand after he had recounted his experiences aboard the *Gladiator*; "you have had a most wonderful escape. The foolish fellows waited too long in the boat; but of course they were totally ignorant of what was happening aboard. When I saw the fire I recalled the boat and sent the second mate in her with instructions to go under the ship's stern and ask you to jump over the taffrail, for I knew it would risk the boat to go alongside, what with her rolling so heavily and the fire raging so violently. I wonder who that poor wretch was! He must have sunk pretty quickly. There now, look! there's the end of the old derelict, her magazine has blown up!" As he spoke, there was a tremendous report, followed by a perfect shower of sparks which flew high up into the air, and the *Neptune* was left alone on the ocean.



The Sacred Chain.

A Story of old Algiers.

By C. H. Lyall.

HIGH above the flat-roofed houses, the cupolas and minarets of Algiers, stands the ancient Kasbah or fortress looking down over the city to the silver waters of the bay.

The vast stretch of buildings, enclosed on every side by impregnable walls, nearly eight feet in thickness, served not only as a fortress and state prison, but also was the Dey's palace and mosque. Long ago these were interspersed with gardens and fountains, where the veiled ladies of the Court amused themselves.

Now there is nothing at all left of these pleasure gardens, and but little even of the massive walls. But above the immense gorgeously painted door giving entrance to the Kasbah, and which was never opened except to the Dey himself, there still stretches an old and rusty chain.

Idly its linked lengths hang now, but in other days it played no unimportant part in the history of the time.

For an old Moorish law enacted, that any fugitive from justice, rightfully or wrongfully condemned alike, who could but reach, and touch, this sacred chain, before he was overtaken by the pursuing janissaries, was henceforth safe—his punishment remitted, his forfeited life given back to him.

Far back, a couple of centuries or more ago, in the full blaze of the August sun, Mahomed ben Ahmed, the Dey's newly appointed chief minister and adviser, rode slowly up to the great painted door, glancing up, as he drew rein beside it, at the chain, hanging, as if in mockery, so high and out of reach.

IT IS THE DEY HIMSELF.—p. 127.

On either side of him, each with one hand on the horse's bridle, while the other grasped a gleaming unsheathed scimitar, stood two attendants, their kaftans and turbans, white, like his own. Only the hated ihoudis (Jews), compelled by law, dressed in black.

All the three men were watching the approaching figure of a man on the road below them. A man who was running, for dear life, up the rough-hewn path which ascended from the city streets to the fortress on the hill.

A week before, Mahomed's predecessor in office had been found dead, stabbed through the heart as he lay asleep, and Hilkiah the Jew had been accused of the treacherous murder by Mahomed, and condemned to die.

To reach and touch the thrice sacred chain was his one chance of escape.

"The ihoudi runs well," muttered the dark-browed Mahomed as he watched, with a strange look of mingled hate and fear, the rapidly nearing figure of the fugitive Jew—more and more closely followed by the cruel janissaries. "What matter though," he went on to himself in less anxious tones, "for—Allah be praised—it is not often that when a man reaches the Door in time, he has the strength left in him for the last supreme effort needed, to take the jump and catch the chain, the mocking delusive chain on which his sole hope of life now rests. Already has he been condemned to die a felon's death for a crime he did not commit. But *he knows whose was the hand that smote the dead prince.* So, let the accursed ihoudi die, that I, Mahomed ben Ahmed, a true son of the Prophet, may live.

Up the long steep road toiled the panting man—his black kaftan, telling of his nationality, flying behind him, looking neither to the right hand nor the left, save that once or twice he casts a quick glance of agonised inquiry at the pursuing janissaries with their drawn scimitars flashing menacingly in the sunshine. His breath comes now in hoarse, panting gasps, and the grey hair clings damp about his streaming brow.

But ah! he has reached the hill-top. "Help me, O God of Abraham," he sobs aloud, "for my Miriam's sake."

With a last great effort he stumbles blindly across the bit of level ground before the Kasbah walls.

Then with the impetus of a final rush he flings himself into the air with wildly groping hands outstretched to reach the slowly swaying chain, and, just missing it, falls in a senseless heap at the foot of the gorgeously painted door.

The flashing scimitars are already raised to slay him as he lies, when suddenly a noble-looking man on horseback, clad in glittering armour, appears on the scene.

It is the Dey himself, Harun, surnamed Al Rashid—the Upright.

With an imperious gesture of inquiry, Harun, the Upright, points to the pitiful figure of the doomed man, lying prone beneath the sacred chain, upon the stones.

The would-be executioners drop their shining blades without a word, and slink off, and disappear before the awful face of the Dey.

The guilty Mahomed would fain do so too, but that his lord's look seems to have turned him into stone, as he sits there, and his very tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth with terror.

"Unbar the gate," thunders the Dey. And with trembling hands and shaking limbs the white-turbaned attendants fling wide the painted door for their lord to pass through, as he alone, of all men, has the right to do.

And as he rides through the great entrance, his war horse—armoured too as if for battle—steps gently, that he may not hurt the prostrate man; and a sudden light springs into the stern eyes of Harun the Good.

Staying his horse's steps for an instant, he grasps the fateful chain with his mailed right hand, and wrenching it free of its many entangled loops, drops its lowest links on to the upturned breast of the half-unconscious man lying at his horse's feet.

Mechanically the poor nerveless fingers of the Jew close across his breast, upon the precious

chain; and as his dazed brain realises what the touch of those cold iron links means to himself—and to Miriam—he faints away. And Harun al Rashid passes in, and the great door closes behind him.

* * * * * * *

"My father comes at last!"

Hilkiah's beautiful young daughter Miriam, with her graceful head thrown back and one hand shading her eyes, stands in front of a cluster of brown Arab tents, far away from the scene of her father's terrible sufferings; and hither, by order of the Dey himself, the old man is being brought in a litter, for Miriam to nurse back to health and strength.

It is deemed safer that Hilkiah should keep as far as possible out of the neighbourhood of his arch-enemy, Mahomed, from whose treachery even the great Harun's protection might not be sufficient.

A group of Arabs are seated on the coarse brown grass by the tents, and on their quaint two-stringed guitars, fashioned out of hollow tortoise-shells, they make a pleasant little accompaniment to their weird desert songs.

Miriam's uncovered face and arms speak of her race, and away from the city laws of dress, she has donned her gayest attire to greet her father.

"My father," she whispers, as she stoops her head to receive the accustomed parental benediction, "I shall always love that wonderful chain."

"And I," he answers, "Harun the Upright."

Caught by a Snake.

HAROLD JUDSON was having a good time, as he wrote to his mother far away in England, and she treasured up his letters as if they had been made of gold.

One day, however, came one which she could hardly hold, for her old fingers shook with terror as she read.

"Thank God with me, mother mine, that I am able to send you a letter at all. Only yesterday I had a most marvellous escape from a horrible death, and even now I can hardly realise that I am safe.

"I was on my way to an inland station, where I had business, and my road lay through an old swamp, partially dried up and surrounded on all sides by thick jungle.

"I had often heard that this road was considered by natives and white men alike to be rather dangerous, but it had slipped my memory until too late, for I was in a hurry.

"I was riding steadily along, and my beautiful mare was enjoying the ride as much as I, when, without an instant's warning, the horse trembled, and I felt the coils of a big snake closing round me.

"That moment is too dreadful to remember, though I cannot forget it for an instant.

"There was no time for thought. Both I and the horse were in the shadow of death, but instinctively I drew my hunting knife, and slashed madly at the thick coil round my body and the neck of my horse.

"It was a keen, true blade, and as I cut I felt the snake's coil tighten round me; and yet, though I realised the moment might be my last, I still hacked in, and then the huge body, with one last convulsive shudder, dropped limp.

"My terrified horse had galloped for dear life along the road, and in that way also I had a marvellous escape. Both of us were preserved, and I know you will join with me in praising Him who sheltered me in the hour of danger."

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